

THE
IMPOSSIBILITY OF
ACHIEVING
SELF-KNOWLEDGE
IN THE NOVELS OF
GRAHAM SWIFT

KATHERINE COTTIER

FOR MUM AND DAD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An enormous thank-you to my parents for all their years of support, love and encouragement – and especially for listening to all that 'arty stuff'. Thank-you to Dr Jim Acheson, my supervisor, for his invaluable patience, words of wisdom and belief in me. My gratitude also to Professor David Gunby for his care and quiet guidance during my Honours and under graduate years. Thank-you to Grandma for her letters 'with something extra' and for reading me fairy tales. Thank-you to my brothers Sam and Luke for their office visits and coffee breaks. An extra special thanks to Jack Charters and Diana Cameron for welcoming me so readily into their homes. Dan, Miles, Dave, Suzanne, Phil, Jen-Jen, Karl, Katy and Sue – thank you for your unfailing interest and encouragement.

CONTENTS

Preface	6
Chapter One:	
Part I – Psychoanalytic Narration in <i>Waterland</i>	10
Part II – Swift's Use of Autobiography in <i>Shuttlecock</i> and <i>Ever After</i>	25
Chapter Two:	
Circularity in the Novels of Graham Swift: <i>Waterland</i> and <i>Last Orders</i>	52
Chapter Three:	
Swift's Use of the Fairy Tale in <i>Waterland</i> , <i>Ever After</i> and <i>Out of This World</i>	87
Works Cited	135

ABBREVIATIONS

EA – Swift, Graham. *Ever After*. London: Picador, 1992.

LO - _____. *Last Orders*. London: Picador, 1996.

OTW - _____. *Out of This World*. London: Penguin Books, 1988

S - _____. *Shuttlecock*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1981.

W - _____. *Waterland*. New York: Washington Square Press,
1985.

PREFACE

In each of his novels Graham Swift provides a kind of prototype for the reader: that of a black, coiled, twisting spiral. The individual remains a fixed point at the centre of the symbol as the curves continuously widen at a steadily increasing distance. As this occurs, the issues and influences of the individual's life also become bigger and harder to understand: family relations, work, societal expectations and the widest, ever-increasing circle of all, the past: History. Over this prototype, Swift lays another spiral – this time in full, in technicolour: the merging colours of stories, fantasy and imagination. As the black and colour meet, the spiral begins to whirl, to whirl and spin until it becomes blurred and the individual at the centre is nothing more than a lost dot, bewildered and afraid.

Shuttlecock, *Out of This World*, *Ever After*, *Waterland* and *Last Orders*, are novels primarily about the importance of self-discovery. The narrators are lost in the ever-widening circle of the past and must follow the spiral backwards until they arrive at the fixed point of themselves. In order to achieve this, each protagonist must come to terms with their place in history, their value in society and their relationships with family. Interspersed in these struggles are the colourful and, at times, painful layers of fantasy and fiction. *Shuttlecock's* Prentis delves among the stories of war and prison escape written by his father in order to ascertain Prentis Senior's real character. However, fact has become fiction and fiction, fact, and Prentis can only examine his own relationship with his father and his feelings for the man. Harry and Sophie of *Out of This World* leave behind images of bygone wars, the uncertainty of media construction and

embrace what is left of their father-daughter relationship and the decisions of their lives. *Waterland*'s Tom Crick admits to listening to stories, telling stories and creating stories. Tom is enmeshed in the giant circle of history and the more he thrashes about, the more tangled he becomes. Stories of the Fens, the Atkinson family dynasty and childhood memories are told and re-told, trapping both reality and fantasy. More than any other narrator, Tom discovers that everything in life is a tale, and discovering the truth about life is as possible in a fairy story as it is in a piece of text book history. Bill Unwin of *Ever After* admits that his narration is a blend of fact and fiction. Bill wishes to know facts: the identity of his father, his mother's role in his step-father's death and the truth behind Matthew Pearce's diaries. But the spiral of reality and fantasy whirls at an ever-increasing pace, and Bill must come to accept his own feelings as truth. The narrators of *Last Orders* are simple men and women, and as they scatter the ashes of their friend Jack Dodds, they too are aware of the impossibility of knowing the meaning of life.

For Swift, story-telling is an integral part of human life. It is the way in which we formulate our identity and live our lives. Fantasy is something that enables us to deal with reality: 'The imagination is there to get you out of yourself, to get beyond yourself, into worlds, into experiences not you' (Swift, National Radio, 22 October 1996). These experiences may well be part reality that become mixed with fantasy and are subsequently fashioned into stories of self, stories of family, and, inevitably, stories of the past. According to Swift, this is the fate of human

nature: it is impossible to separate the colours of fantasy from the black of reality, just as it is impossible to decipher what was originally fact and what was fiction. We can only follow the spiral back through the tales of history, society, community and family until we arrive at the fixed dot in the centre: ourselves. For all his many narratives and layers of meaning, Swift tells us that we can never really know ourselves: we can decide who and what we believe to be true, and accept the consequences of those beliefs – but we can never understand ourselves fully. Just as the black and the colour of the spiral merge and blur before our eyes, so too does the reality and fantasy of life, leaving us to face the impossibility of achieving self-knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

PART I

PSYCHOANALYTIC NARRATION IN *WATERLAND*

PART II

SWIFT'S USE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN *SHUTTLECOCK* AND *EVER AFTER*

PART I

The time past departs not, nothing that was worthy in the past departs; no Truth or Goodness realised by man ever dies, or can die; but is all still here, and recognised or not, lives and works through endless changes.

(Carlyle, 'Characteristics', 99)

In telling stories to others, we may, for most purposes, be said to be performing straightforward narrative actions. However, we also tell stories to ourselves. This is assuming that there is a self to tell something to, a someone else serving as audience who is oneself or *one's* self. *Out of This World* explicitly exemplifies this relationship, with the main characters, Harry and Sophie, alternating narratives which reveal the memories of their entwined past. Sophie speaks specifically to her analyst, Dr K, a counterpart to the listening reader. Harry relates his sometimes horrific experiences as a photo-journalist as if he were in the consulting rooms of a psychiatrist, but in the analyst's absence, speaks to the memory of his estranged daughter, Sophie. As in Sophie's relationship with Dr K, the reader of Harry's narration becomes involved in the text as another kind of analyst. Harry and Sophie are like the narrators of *The Sweet Shop Owner*, *Shuttlecock*, *Ever After* and *Last Orders*, who all face a major dilemma: existence without historical roots, and consequent isolation from the modern world. These narrators must ensure that the story is told to themselves. They must reclaim the

events and experiences of their past in order to resume life in the present, and the inevitable future. This is most pertinent to *Waterland's* Crick who retells his story on a number of levels: to the reader; to Price and the children of his sixth form class; and to himself. No one mode overtakes another, although the reader realises that Crick, like Sophie, Harry, Prentis, Bill, Ray and his mates, is struggling to relate his tale to re-establish the past, order the present and make plans for the future.

Swift consistently portrays characters who re-examine and re-assess their past. In doing so, he emphasises a significant, and frustrating facet of humanity: the impossibility of knowing. As the analysand recalls fragments of memories, the listening analyst construes these in a different way. The characters of Swift's novels, like ourselves, recall memories, and alter them, depending on experiences and emotions of the moment. As Crick notes, memory cannot keep 'fixed and clear' (OTW 31) moments of our lives. Thus, Swift's narrators jump from all manner of events and happenings, in an attempt to recollect the past, and make sense of the present. With each memory we attempt to interpret and place the experience and event in time, but, as we delve into the annals of our personal past, we find that memories are transient and subject to change. *Waterland's* Crick observes that the same process is used in historical science where the transient nature of memory proves to be equally baffling as the realm of personal history:

I began to demand of history an Explanation. Only to uncover in this dedicated search more mysteries, more fantasticalities, more wonders and grounds for astonishment than I started with, only to conclude forty years later ... that history is a yarn. (*W* 47)

Crick implies that reality is created. The more we examine the past, the more we discover, and the more transient it becomes. Thus, the border between fact and fiction becomes blurred, as in traditional psychoanalysis, where it is impossible to establish that x is fantasy and y is fact.

Often the stories we tell are life-historical or autobiographical; we locate them in the past. For example, 'I was an outrageous mischief maker as a child'. No matter how many years ago the events of these histories took place, they remain present tellings. We change many aspects of these histories of self and others as we change for better or worse, and depending on the implied or stated questions to which we are responding. As Carlyle notes in the epigraph to this chapter: 'The past departs not ... but is all still here, and recognised or not, lives and works through endless changes' (99). Crick adopts the role of self-analyst. He constantly re-interprets and re-tells his own stories, challenging his understanding of the wider world and, more specifically, his own life. Having

attempted to make sense of one historical episode, Crick, the analyst, is quick to discover another fragment and ensure further self-examination:

But why, we ask, did Louis' neck happen to be - ? Because ... And when we have gleaned that reason we will want to know, But why *that* reason? Because ... And when we have that further reason, But why again - ? Because ... Why? ... Because ... Why? ... (W 81)

Crick has spent a life-time playing the part of analyst to the thousands of stories told by many 'analysands': Henry Crick's war stories, the folklore of the Fens, his mother's fairy tales, the rumours of Old Bill Clay and his 'witch' wife, Martha, and the text-book histories of the French Revolution. Crick draws particular attention to the acquisition of these analytical skills when he describes the discovery of the dead Freddie Parr:

He watched; weighed evidence. Put facts together. Saw a new bruise on an old bruise ... Ah yes, he's hooked by now, it's got serious, this historical method, this explanation hunting. It's a way of getting at the truth. (W 198)

Through his years of interpreting various accounts of history, Crick applies the very same technique to himself. As an analyst Crick assembles the facts and asks the questions, often revealing a 'new bruise' concealing the story of an 'old bruise'. Thus, he elicits changing and changed versions of the one event.

This manner of 'getting to the truth' can only be done in the present. The 'explanation hunting' can only be accomplished through discoveries in narrative; a narrative consisting of a story-teller and story listener; the analyst and the analysand. Although these remain constant, the events narrated change according to the nature of the present. As Swift makes clear, the past must always be accessed from the present, and what occurs in the present must inevitably affect the portrayal of memory. Bill Unwin of *Ever After*, in the role of both analyst and analysand mode, examines his memories of his mother: he pictures her eating scones with jam and cream on her birthday, shopping in Paris, and train rides in the countryside. On re-examination, Unwin sees his mother and himself in a different light:

I could have lived for, lived in that squeeze. Until I grew up and realised it was almost entirely selfish. She might have been hugging herself, or a handy cushion or spaniel. (EA 16)

When re-examining his memories, Bill also discovers that Sam was perhaps not a bedazzled young lover, eager for a chance of marriage with an older, moneyed woman, but a young man suddenly finding himself amidst tragedy and responsibility. The most drastic example of this process of learning from re-examined memory occurs in *Waterland*. Crick speaks of his 'potato head' brother, Dick, as being an individual who has 'Not a hope for the future ... never

asks questions, doesn't want to know. Forgets tomorrow what he's told today' (*W* 241). Despite this doomed approach to life Dick does make a discovery about his past: his biological father is his grandfather. Even a 'potato-head' can comprehend the enormity of this. Until now, his memories have consisted of a reasonably happy and secure family life. With prompting from Tom, Dick demands an explanation of history and in doing so shatters the 'reality' of his past and present. The discovery is too much for Dick, and the result is suicide.

Despite Dick's unhappy end, Tom recognises the importance of achieving a circular journey through time, to the past, and back to the present. By looking to his past and retelling his memories in the present he fulfils Schafer's hypothesis that: 'We must regress in order to progress'(35). Mary, however, has no desire to revisit her adolescent days in the Fens. The horrors of her teenage abortion, her part in Freddie Parr's murder and Dick Crick's suicide have been blacked out: '[Mary] made do ... with nothing. Not believing in looking back or looking forward, she learnt how to mark time' (*W* 95). While her husband has made a life of history, constantly attempting to retrieve the lost, Mary lives as if without memory. As Crick's narration sporadically returns to the present, he again adopts the role of analyst in his relationship with Mary, probing, 'Do you remember Mary?' (*W* 223). The reader can never be sure of Mary's memories, as she remains very much within the boundaries of the narrative, a character constructed by Crick, the story teller. Mary is not the first Fenlander to repress horrific memories behind a veil of memory loss. Crick believes that 'there are quite a few who can't forget

what a mad place the world is' (*W* 168), and consequently develop 'amnesia'. His father foreshadows Mary: 'Henry Crick forgets. He says: I remember nothing. But that's just a trick of the brain. That's like saying: 'I don't care to remember, and I don't want to talk about it' (*W* 168). Henry learns to overcome his memory loss, and with the help of his wife-to-be, Helen Atkinson, turns his experiences into stories. Acting as analyst, he relays these to his family, just as Tom has narrated stories to his sixth form history class. Mary, for whatever reasons, is not capable of partaking in this therapy. Consequently, she unconsciously lives with the past, kidnapping the child she could never have. As her actions reveal, Mary yearns to confront the memories, but finds she cannot, and returns to the religion she so emphatically adopted after her teenage abortion. Unlike her husband, Mary does not possess the resources of story telling, and therefore struggles with the only buoy she recognises: Catholicism, which has her 'Enclosed within the circle of a crucifix' (*W* 248). Crick is 'afraid to tread the mine fields of the past' (*W* 248) with his wife, and as she stares past him in apparent oblivion, his only comment is: 'perhaps amnesia's best, perhaps, amnesia's the cure for all ...' (*W* 249). Crick cannot, however, truly convince himself of the validity of this statement, softening his earlier conjecture with: 'Ah Mary (ah Price), we wander from the real world, we all come to our asylums' (*W* 250). Swift's novels are abundant with 'asylums'. Price must escape the asylum of nuclear fear; Crick and Mary must escape the fear of their past. Crick succeeds through his therapeutic adoption of psychoanalytical dialogue, breaking through to a murky but nevertheless liveable present. Mary, on the other hand, is restrained within

the physical walls of the mental hospital, and the even thicker walls of her past, not able to progress to the present.

The psychoanalytic relationship is primarily one about sharing stories. In these narrations it is hoped that the past will be exorcised. Crick believes we tell stories out of fear:

Children to whom, throughout history, stories have been told, chiefly but not always at bedtime, in order to quell restless thoughts; whose need of stories is matched only by the need adults have of children to tell stories to, of receptacles for their stock of fairy-tales, of listening ears on which to unload, bequeath those most unbelievable yet haunting of fairy tales, their own lives. (W 6)

Here, Crick draws attention to the need we have to narrate our lives, to quell the fears of our experiences. Modern society readily recognises the validity of this practice by frequenting the rooms of the psychoanalyst, delving among memories that have become too fearful to disown. As Crick comments: 'First you tell your dreams. First you speak your innermost fears. Then all the rest follows - the whole story. Even back to when you were little -' (W117). Crick must relate his memories and history of family violence, madness and incest. He must come to terms with his own role in murder, abortion and barrenness. Henry Crick, the narrator's father, also discovers the medicinal value of story telling in relating his

war experiences as a series of 'Salty Tales from the Trenches' to his listening children. As a people, the Fenlanders have long told stories to overcome the harsh reality of the monotonous Fens, and Tom Crick follows his ancestors' example, imparting stories from history, his personal past and the present to his listening analyst, the reader. Crick's 'bedtime stories' serve two purposes: first, they are a method of dispelling his own fears of a futile existence and meaningless future, and more specifically, a reminder that history is not an invention to be languidly taken for granted, but a process of which he is an active part; a process which ensures that the past eventually catches the present: 'slapping my face and telling me to take a good look at the mess I [am] in' (W 67). The second purpose of Tom's stories provides a small, but integral means of comfort to 'his children' who fear the end of the world via nuclear war. In this respect, the analyst and analysand have reversed positions: Crick adopts the role of analyst, retelling his own stories, and the stories of history in a way that attempts to answer Price's fearful question: 'What is the point of history?'

Through his rambling narration Crick, in a small but significant way, dispels the fears of a nuclear attuned generation. This is emphasised as Scott Lewis, the headmaster of the school, stands to farewell the long serving history teacher, Tom Crick. Price and fellow members of the Holocaust Club chant 'Fear is here! Fear is here!' (W 251). Lewis has ruled a 'phasing out of history', claiming this subject to have no relevance in the modern world. The chant of the Holocaust Club protests against this, culminating in Price's stand: 'No cuts! Keep Crick!' (W

252). Crick knows it is the stories the children need to quell their fears. They need to be told stories: 'explaining, evading the facts, making up meanings, taking a larger view, putting things into perspective, dodging the here and now, education, history, fairy-tales - it helps to eliminate the fear' (*W* 182). Lewis is well-meaning, but has missed the importance of the past's place in the future. He is concerned only with the innocence of his students while they remain in school, believing himself to hold the key to their mental and perhaps even physical well being:

A vision of Lewis ... Don't be afraid. Lewis will save you. Follow me - into our special bunker. (Yes didn't you know? It's specially provided, specially constructed. School and shelter. School as sanctuary. Places for children only -). (*W* 252)

Crick's sarcasm reveals that Lewis does not foresee the maturity of children into adults, or allow for the children who are already concerning themselves with issues of adulthood. Crick, however, is abundantly aware of the 'Children, who will inherit the world'. The children who are young adults and the adults who are young children, all need the comfort of stories. They require the opportunity to narrate their story to an 'analyst', and hear the stories of the 'analysand'. The assembly of frightened young people will not be silent until Crick, the story-teller, takes the dais to begin another retelling of the past. The analyst's retellings progressively influence the what and how of the stories told by the analysands.

The analyst establishes new, though often contested or resisted, questions that lead to a variety of narrative possibilities. The end product of this interweaving of texts is a radically new, jointly authored work or way of working. Crick's narrative develops along strikingly similar lines.

As analyst, Crick asks pertinent questions of his own narrative, progressively influencing the particular events he relates, as well as determining the time from which they are narrated. With the aid of the school-boy Price, and his own revealing questions, Crick re-works his narrative, addressing the issues of his history class students, and his own lost identity. As Tom Crick's stories are unravelled, the roles of analyst and analysand become entwined. The reader becomes a student of history and the sixth form children become the reader, a blend that ultimately produces the 'analyst' of *Waterland*. Price shoulders the responsibility of the role, preventing Crick's narration from being reduced to the pointless, self-pitying ramble of an aging man. One of Price's main roles in *Waterland* is to act as a catalyst for Crick's periods of self-examination. It is Price who consistently brings the narrative back to the question: 'What is the point of history?' Crick has revolved his life around history, having spent thirty-two years teaching the French Revolution and the like, only to find the headmaster of his school is 'cutting back on history', leaving him without a job. Price, through his constant questioning, forces Crick to re-examine, and justify his loyalty to his teaching subject:

[Crick] 'We're all free to interpret.'

[Price] 'You mean, we can find whatever meaning we like in history?'

(Actually I do believe that. I believe it more and more. History: a lucky dip of meanings. Events elude meaning, but we look for meanings. Another definition of Man: the animal who craves meaning - but knows - (W 106)

The reader is left to contemplate the unfinished sentence: 'but knows' what? That we can never find meaning? Swift is abundantly aware of history's deviant nature. The reader accompanies Tom Crick in his discovery that reality is a transient, opaque phenomenon to be regarded with mystery and a certain amount of caution. This approach to the world is exemplified by Crick's philosophy on the reliability of memory:

Memory can't keep fixed and clear those final moments. Memory can't even be sure whether what I saw, I saw first in anticipation before I actually saw it, as if I had witnessed somewhere already - a memory before it occurred. (W 268)

This encompasses the essence of the analyst and analysand relationship, reinforcing the allusive nature of psychoanalysis. Inherent in *Waterland's* narration is the exploration of memory's unreliability, the transitoriness of new discovery and the volatile, often opaque border between fact and fiction.

As the reality of the narrative alters, the border between fact and fiction becomes blurred, and like traditional psychoanalysis it is impossible to establish that x is fantasy and y is fact. Though the confusion between 'fact' and 'fiction' is most evident in *Waterland*, it is the underlying theme of all Swift's novels. Crick's statements about the uncertainty of history and experience hold a universal theory further explored in *Shuttlecock*, *Ever After*, *Out of This World* and *Last Orders*. Interwoven with this philosophy is the juxtaposition of 'tangible history' (written history: diaries, autobiography, letters, text books) and the illusive history of folklore and fairy tales. As the psychoanalytical relationship emphasises, many obstacles prevent us from determining the past, so much so, that it becomes impossible to discover a 'true' reality. As Crick says: 'We don't know the half, so a good half must be make-believe' (*W* 105).

Crick accepts the possibility of both realities, realising that no matter how many historic avenues he may travel, he will never discover *the* reality. He must attempt to construct a *version* of reality that is acceptable to his own beliefs and experiences. As Swift's narrators each work through the psychoanalytical relationship, they realise the impossibility of achieving self-knowledge. Instead, each narrator creates and formulates memories in order to construct a reality that will enable them to accept the past and live the present. The reader is tempted to find fault with a number of explanations offered by the various narrators: Bill Unwin's idealised memory of his wife Ruth; Tom Crick's portrayal of Martha Clay

as a witch; Prentis' paranoia that Quinn knows his every move; and Sophie Beech's belief that her father is an uncaring, cold-hearted follower of the aftermath of war and human suffering. Experience warns the reader that a certain amount of fiction is involved in these recollections. Swift argues that reality is fantasy; a transient, wandering creature that can never be captured, for, after all, 'man is a story-telling animal' who must create his own narration.

PART II

All knowing and all telling are subject to the conventions of art. Because we apprehend reality through culturally determined types, we can report the most particular event only in the form of a representational fiction.
(Scholes, 151)

Stronger than our impulses to tell our stories to someone is the need to formulate our own peculiar narrative: our autobiography. Five of Swift's six novels are written in the form of fictional autobiography. Each implicitly pursues the various problems inherent in first person narration including the evasive nature of memory, the reliability of the narrator, and the recurring possibility that the writer uses autobiography as a stage on which to perform, seeking praise from an audience. These problems make the attainment of truth and self-knowledge difficult, if not impossible. This chapter will examine Swift's use of the autobiography genre in the two novels, *Shuttlecock* and *Ever After*. In both these works Swift uses the framework of an autobiography written in the present, intermittently interrupted by an autobiography written in the past. In *Shuttlecock* Prentis presents his life via excerpts from his father's autobiography written years after his experiences as a World War II spy. *Ever After* is the fictional autobiography of Bill Unwin who repeatedly compares his life in the 1980s to the life of his Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce, who is presented through diary

passages. These novels differ from Swift's other work in the strikingly self-conscious manner in which the narrators present themselves to the reader. Both Bill and Prentis acknowledge the fact that they are physically *writing* their life's happenings, as opposed to verbal, even sub-conscious narration, as in *Last Orders*, or lecturing a class of students, as in *Waterland*. However, it is the utilisation of autobiography within autobiography that forms an integral part of *Shuttlecock* and *Ever After*, and quietly draws the reader's attention to Swift's implicit, but recurring question: is it ever possible to discover truth?

Autobiography critics Finney and Landow tell us that all autobiographers write for a reason. Most are motivated by the need to pursue the question 'Who Am I?' This issue noticeably becomes more prominent with age, and most autobiographies are indeed compiled by those entering their 'twilight' years, or those facing a mid-life need to structure their memories amongst the muddle of present living. There is also something innately Darwinian about our need to immortalise ourselves. Autobiography ensures that the story of our lives continues through the generations to come. In Swift's fictional autobiographies the narrators confront these issues, but are most concerned with finding answers to questions pertaining to their personal lives, most of which stem from the issue inherent in autobiography: 'Who Am I?'

Graham Swift chooses to fuse the main components of autobiography: first-person narrative, text book history, letters and diaries. In the manner of the

traditional subjective diary or letter, *Shuttlecock*'s Prentis acknowledges that he writes about himself and events in the present: 'You will have gathered by now that I am writing all this as thoughts come to me and as things happen'(S 39). He does, however, use elements of the traditional subjective autobiography, telling the reader about his childhood, and in particular, his relationship with his pet hamster, Sammy. Within Prentis' autobiography are constant allusions to the autobiography of Prentis Senior. 'Dad's' book, *Shuttlecock: The Story of a Secret Agent*, was written in the 1950s, well after World War II exploits he describes. The style is that of the traditional autobiography in which factual stories are told in a narrative. However, as Prentis' own autobiography progresses, the reader becomes increasingly aware of the constant juxtaposition of fact and fiction in the construction of his story. On several occasions, Prentis presents the police archive files which contribute an integral part to the mystery surrounding 'Dad's book'. However, the bare facts of these files must be embellished upon as Quinn and Prentis speculate on possible relationships, motives and consequences.

Shuttlecock opens with the narrator remembering his pet hamster, a tenth birthday gift. Prentis is befuddled as to why he should suddenly recall this memory, and asks: 'Why should I have thought of these things?' (S 5). Having recalled this childhood period, he writes:

It's strange ... no sooner had I written that first confession than there were lots of other things that had to be examined and written down - and now I'm at it again. I don't know where it's getting me. It's not as if anything extraordinary is happening. But I feel I have to go on. (S 39)

This feeling of 'having to go on' leads to a whole host of questions concerning Prentis' relationship with his father, his relationship with Quinn and his relationship with his wife and two children. But behind these issues lie the larger uncertainties which Prentis must face if he is to accept any possible answers to the question, 'Who Am I?' Prentis must consider not only his father's reasons for composing the original *Shuttlecock* autobiography but also his interpretation of that work, and the ultimate construction of the war-hero father. This is also linked with Prentis' relationship to the notion of power and knowledge. With Quinn's help Prentis must accept that he can never possess the truth about the files he works with in the police archives, his father, and most importantly, himself.

In *Approaches to Victorian Autobiography* Landow quotes the German phenomenologist Max Scheler and his argument regarding autobiography. Scheler holds that 'creative dissociation ... is the basic process of psychic evolution,'(Landow, xvii) thereby implying that dislocation is a necessary condition of achieving a higher level of inner complexity. Autobiography provides this dislocation and allows the writer to confront questions and make discoveries about oneself and the world which one inhabits. Swift's view of autobiography is

a little more diverse. His novels argue that dislocation is certainly one factor in achieving psychic development, but (re)-construction is another. This chapter's epigraph states: 'All knowing and all telling are subject to the conventions of art ... [W]e can report the most particular event only in the form of a representational fiction' (Scholes, 51). Swift's novels argue a combination of Scheler's and Scholes's philosophies. His fictional autobiographies reveal that 'psychic evolution' is achieved through the re-construction of experience with the aid of fiction.

'Dad's' autobiography, *Shuttlecock: The Life of a Secret Agent* is Swift's most striking example of life as fiction and fiction as life, forming a parallel reality constantly juxtaposed to the present of Prentis Junior. As the trials of his narrow world appear to close around him, Prentis takes to reading his father's autobiography, which recounts his father's years as a spy during World War II. Prentis believes that there is some secret meaning hidden in his father's words, secrets only a son may understand. The reader also suspects that somehow the happenings of his father's autobiography are linked to the present and the Dead Crimes Unit. So, the son pores over the book hoping he can discover the father he remembers as a boy, rather than the silent man he now visits twice a week. Prentis Junior has never resolved his feelings of inferiority in his relationship with his father, and his associations with Quinn (Prentis' boss at the Dead Crimes Unit) are strikingly similar. Both men have power over Prentis; Prentis struggles with this and exerts power, almost in retaliation, over his family. As these

relationships spiral, twist and turn Prentis asks more and more questions of his wartime father:

There are a thousand questions I want to ask, about things that aren't actually stated in the book ... sometimes this book which is all fact seems to me like fiction, like something that never really took place ... What was it like, what was it really like? (S 51)

Dad is silent, forever caged in the walls of his breakdown. The answers can only be found within the pages of *Shuttlecock*. The 'facts' are before Prentis, but he wants to know more: 'What was it like Dad? What was it really like?'(S 139). Vigilantly, the son continues his search for explanations and remnants of his war hero father, until nothing else seems to matter:

I have been trying to discover in these and other pages some clue to what happened in the Chateau Martine, some inkling of this experience beyond words ... Why do I want to know this - like an interrogator myself? Because I will find out what Dad is really like? (S 106)

The answer to this comes back to Prentis' motivation behind his own autobiography. He writes, not to discover the true being of his father, but his relationship with his father, others important in his life, and himself. Prentis'

reason for writing is primarily motivated by the typical autobiographical questions: 'Who Am I?' 'How Do I Relate to the World Around Me?'

In arriving at possible answers to these questions, Prentis carries out a game of 'shuttlecock' between the feasible facts and the conceivable fiction of his father's autobiography. Prentis notices gaps in his father's story and explains them away by quoting the 'stress of circumstances' which tested the latter's 'presence of mind, tenacity and powers of observation' (S 105). He thinks that the memory of interrogation was so horrific that his father may have buried the event somewhere in his mind, or that perhaps the memory was too close to the surface of the mind and therefore too horrifying to be recounted. Not able to decide, Prentis, with the approach of a literary critic, tackles the writing style of the Chateau Martine chapter: 'These pages are more vivid, more real, more believable than any other part of the book ... the style of Dad's writing becomes - how shall I put it? - more imaginative, more literary, more speculative' (S 106). These arguments become prominent with Quinn's invitation to discuss the missing Dead Crimes Files. Quinn reveals another spectrum of mystery: that of X, Z and Prentis Senior. X has blackmailed both Z and Prentis Senior, hinting that he knows the truth about the Chateau war imprisonment. X insinuates that Prentis Senior is not the war hero he has made himself out to be. This information reveals the possibility that Prentis Senior succumbed to torture. More than this, Dad has had an affair with Z's wife, and Z has committed suicide on hearing this information. However, X's blackmail exploits do not achieve the

desired result, for following Z's death, Prentis Senior suffers a mental breakdown, imprisoned within the walls of his own silence. In the muddle of these mysteries Quinn heightens the debate between fact and fiction. Earlier in the novel he asks: 'What's true Prentis, tell me: what really happens or what people will accept as true?' (S 89). It is Quinn who must accept the challenge and enter the game of shuttlecock, batting reality and fantasy to and fro.

Quinn reveals his information concerning Dad's war exploits and possible betrayal, but follows it with a whole host of other conflicting possibilities: 'Your father may know nothing' (S 184); 'X would have been in a position ... to make spiteful, unfounded attack which had an apparent historical basis'(S 185); 'In mid-September '44 three British agents were rounded up, almost simultaneously, by the Germans and shot' (S 185); 'X wants to incriminate your father. He searches round for facts, coincidences, that will apparently do this. His whole purpose is to suggest the wrong sort of deduction' (S 185); 'A breakdown can be triggered by a false accusation, by the *threat* of blackmail, as well as by the real thing'(S 197). Prentis joins the game he has started some time before, reflecting on the content of *Shuttlecock*: 'The last chapters are *more* convincing than the other parts of the book, even though the other parts are about things nobody disputes are true' (S 186). Prentis eventually arrives at the crux of the matter: 'Why should he write a false story anyway? Why should he have written his book at all and put himself at risk? Shouldn't he have just kept quiet?' (S 187). As previously discussed in this chapter, autobiographical motivation is often a crucial factor in understanding

the narrator's story. Rather than answering the typical question in autobiography, 'Who Am I?', Dad has evidently said, 'I know who I am and I want to be someone else'. This, too, is possible in a genre where fact and fiction are not always separate. Quinn says, 'I'm speaking hypothetically' (S 187) followed by, '[Dad] had to justify how he got out of the Chateau. He couldn't just say, they let me go. His war record up till then had been pretty remarkable - the grand finale had to live up to it' (S 187). Once again it is Quinn who explains the relationship between fact and fiction to the distressed Prentis and eager reader:

Why are the final chapters more convincing, more heartfelt than the rest? Because it's here that the real issue lies. The *true* exploits, all the brave and daring deeds, what do they matter? They can be treated almost like fiction, but the part of the book that's really a lie - that's where all the urgency is. It's here that he's trying to save himself. Why does it read like a real escape? Because it *is* an escape, a quite real escape of a kind. (S 187)

Shuttlecock: The Life of a Secret Agent has successfully blended fact and fiction, so much so it is impossible to tell which is which. Only Dad himself can be sure of what was, and is, true, and Dad is imprisoned in silence. Quinn understands the motivation behind the *Shuttlecock* autobiography, and somewhat sympathetically says: 'In writing [the book, your father] was torn between the desire to construct this saving lie and an instinct not to falsify himself completely

... Behind all the “authentication:” ... he puts down little hints’ (S 188). These are hints and clues which can be followed, and perhaps may solve the mystery of Dad’s time at the Chateau, X’s blackmail and Dad’s subsequent silence. Prentis chooses not to follow this path.

As the reader realises that *Shuttlecock: The Life of a Secret Agent* may have been a cover for the real Prentis Senior, we also recognise that Prentis Junior’s preoccupation with the authenticity of his father’s autobiography has been a cover to his own answer to the question ‘Who Am I?’ Again it is Quinn who re-directs the focus. Prentis asks of his father, ‘Was he a traitor?’ and Quinn replies, ‘Perhaps that isn’t really the question. The question is, if he was, could you handle it?’(S 186). Prentis must examine the evidence and determine his own judgment of the facts and fiction. Dad cannot participate in a defence, and thanks to Quinn’s intervention, will not be called to account for his version of the Chateau Martine events. Therefore, Prentis must examine the effect of the findings on his own life and his relationship with his father. Early in the novel Prentis writes: ‘It’s odd that all the time I could have asked [Dad] these things, I never did - as if I was never concerned to know the whole truth’ (S 51). This is perhaps the main issue Prentis must come to terms with. He constantly strives to know the ‘truth’ about his father’s war exploits, but when offered a chance to view the condemning Dead Crimes files, he balks, realising that knowing either way will still expose doubts and failings. At the start of the novel Prentis knows nothing of his father’s dubious exploits. He is both innocent and ignorant. He

believes the words within the pages of *Shuttlecock*, and hero-worships his father as a brave and courageous man. As the novel progresses, the reader is exposed to the investigative element of Dad's *Shuttlecock* autobiography, and also to the psychic development and maturity of Prentis Junior. By the end of the novel, Prentis has decided that 'Perhaps uncertainty is better than either certainty or ignorance' (S 197). He and Quinn destroy the incriminating evidence. In making this choice to 'be in the dark' (S 199), Prentis is liberated from his father's dominating shadow. On leaving Quinn's he experiences a feeling of having 'emerged out of some confinement' (S 203), and says: 'We are all looking for a space where we can be free, where we cannot be reached, where we are masters' (S 208). Prentis is eventually able to find this space. By destroying the file, Prentis undertakes a direct confrontation with history and discovers that it is not knowledge but the acceptance of uncertainty that is humanising; ambiguity enables him to leave his father's past and embark on the Here and Now.

On Quinn's retirement Prentis literally becomes 'master' of the Dead Crimes Unit. He now has power over his employees and over the information that resides within the locked safe. In the issue of Dad's betrayal Quinn stated: 'You see, it's the knowledge that matters, it's the knowledge that makes the difference' (S 197). Quinn asserts that the power of knowledge can be used for good and evil. Both Quinn and Prentis choose to use their power for what they believe is good, protecting those who do not need to know; enabling them to continue in ignorance and uncertainty. After years of wondering about his father and

searching for clues, Prentis discovers that 'You penetrate one mystery only to find another' (S 201). However, he is content with this and returns to his wife and children a changed man. However, on promotion Prentis has access to the incriminating files of knowledge and people within his power. Despite his almost perverse pleasure in tantalising and misleading the Dead Crimes staff, Prentis has come a long way in his own self-knowledge, and is finally content with his relationship with his father: 'I sometimes think, with the knowledge Dad perhaps has and believes I don't, our relations could not be more finely tuned than they are' (S 213). The dislocation and dissociation of autobiography have enabled Prentis to achieve a kind of 'psychic evolution' and maturity. But as he re-structures his life and the muddle of his relationships are straightened out, Prentis finds that he no longer has a need for his narrations. Revelations about the creativity and construction of Dad's autobiography have served as a warning to both Prentis and the reader. As Prentis is only too aware, each reported event or experience is a form of representational fiction. The final paragraph of *Shuttlecock* confirms this argument, and is perhaps a tongue-in-cheek plea from Swift himself:

One day ... I stopped reading Dad's book. I inquired no further. How much of a book is in the words and how much is behind or in between the lines? Perhaps it is best not to probe too deeply into those invisible regions, but to accept on trust what is there on the page as the best showing the author could make. And the same is true of *this* book ...

Once you have read it, it may be better not to peer too hard beneath the surface of what it says - or ... what it doesn't say. (S 214)

Prentis, the reader and Swift therefore understand that 'All knowing and all telling are subject to the conventions of art ... [W]e can report the most particular event only in the form of a representational fiction' (Scholes 151). Despite Prentis's protestations we have probed beneath the surface of the novel and discovered that experiences can be re-constructed and even re-invented. The attainability of 'truth' is futile; fact and fiction are entwined, even in the genre of autobiography.

Like *Shuttlecock*, *Ever After* is also written as a fictional autobiography. Again Swift employs a fusion of the main forms of autobiography: memoir, subjective narration, diaries and letters. Like Prentis, Bill Unwin freely acknowledges that he writes in the present, without following a preconceived structure: 'I have penned in my time - long ago - a thesis and an academic paper or two, but I have never begun to write anything as - personal - as this' (EA 4). He too is aware of the constant opposition between fantasy and reality: 'Yet this way in which I write is surely not *me*' (EA 4). Bill finds an ally in the diaries of a Victorian ancestor, Matthew Pearce, who also struggles with his identity. These aspects of the novel are presented in diary form. Bill exposes diary excerpts, constantly filling the gaps in Matthew's story with conjecture of his own, and drawing the reader's attention to the narrow line between the reality of life and the ease with which we re-construct.

Ever After opens with a caution: 'These are, I should warn you, the words of a dead man' (EA 1). As the narrator continues, we discover he is 'prematurely aged', and suffering a mid-life crisis. His motivation for writing clearly stems from a need to structure his life and adjust to the present. For Bill Unwin the 'Who Am I?' question is crucial to his writings: 'Is this how I am? Perhaps these pages will eventually explain. Perhaps they will give *me* an explanation' (EA 4). His writings are intermittently interrupted by excerpts from the diaries of Matthew Pearce, who also writes to discover his place in the turbulent times of the Industrial Revolution. Bill recognises the similarities between himself and his ancestor, writing:

And if I conjure out of the Notebooks a complete, yet hybrid being, part truth, part fiction, is that so false? I only concur, with the mind of the man himself, who must have asked, many a time: So what is real and what is not? And who am I? Am I this, or am I that? (EA 90).

In order to arrive at possible answers to these questions, Bill must confront a number of other issues in his life: his father's suicide; his birth-father's identity; Ruth's fidelity; and the judgement of what has been 'real' in his life, and what has been pure imagination. At the same time, the reader and Bill follow Matthew's inner development as he struggles with the greater questions of his time: God, evolution, family, and betrayal.

Essentially, the diaries of Matthew Pearce investigate the notion of making a choice about how we see reality. At twenty-two years of age, Matthew visits Lyme Regis and encounters a fossilised ichthyosaur that disturbs his faith in the power of God. He hides this revelation from those around him; falls in love and marries a vicar's daughter. Matthew and Elizabeth live in harmony and happiness until the death of their third child, Felix, at the age of one year and ten months. Matthew's misgivings concerning a loving and merciful God who rules the world are again shaken to the surface, and again, he keeps them hidden from his family, revealing his true thoughts and beliefs on the pages of his Notebooks. It is here that he recalls the moment he stood 'face to face with the skull of a beast that must have lived ... unimaginably longer ago than even the most generous computations from Scripture allowed for the beginning of the world' (*EA* 101). For Matthew this is 'The moment of my unbelief. The beginning of my make-belief' (*EA* 101). Prior to seeing the ichthyosaur he considered the world a stable place governed by a God who had a plan for every living thing. The ichthyosaur changes this conception and Matthew begins to see a world absent of omnipotent power. He chooses to abandon his faith and see the world as a complex place that cannot be easily explained, just as he chooses to make a pretence of his 'humble submission to Providence' (*EA* 99). Before the episode of the ichthyosaur Matthew is innocent of other possible explanations for the existence of his world. 'Innocence', Bill tells us, is 'insidiously close, in sound and sense, to 'ignorance'. Not knowing something we are 'innocent of it' ... Yet

from another point of view, only the truth is, truly, innocent' (EA 159). However, the truth is something that can never be totally recovered, and the narrator asks: 'When Matthew determined to know the truth [about God], was it Matthew who was the foolish innocent, or was it the rest of the world, happy in its worldly credulity?' (EA 159). It is impossible to know the answer to this question, yet the issue is at the heart of Bill's own writings.

Within the pages of his autobiography Bill attempts to address a number of issues in his life: his relationship with his mother; his relationship with his step-father, Sam, and the resentment he holds against Sam for not being his 'real' father; the reason for his 'real' father's suicide; and finally, his idyllic relationship with his actress wife, Ruth, and the possibility that this may not have been all he thought. For Bill, the search for the truth about these issues is a recurrent factor in his life. However, when examining Matthew's diaries he is aware that stories and 'truth' can be altered: 'I invent all this ... It can't have been like this simply because I imagine it so' (EA 109). By making the reader sensitive to the work as a fabrication, the narrator also enables us to see that everything from historical accuracy to childhood memory is as much a product of our collective imagination as it is of fact. The narrator's intention is to expose the story's fictitiousness in order to intensify the significance of the fiction for the reader. Bill repeatedly draws attention to the artificiality of his narration in connection with Matthew Pearce, but is less inclined to do so in reference to his own life. He does, however, admit 'There has always been ... this other world, this second world to

fall back on - a more reliable world in so far as it does not hide that its premise is illusion' (EA 69). Although conscious of this illusory world, Bill finds it difficult to accept that reality and the imaginary can exist side by side in the here and now of his living reality. With regard to Matthew, Bill can say that the 'facts [are] mixed with a good deal of not necessarily false invention' (EA 90). In part, Bill writes to retain his life with Ruth, but as other relationships and other people in his life crowd his memories he must concede: 'What is the difference between belief and make-belief? What makes us give to any one belief ... the peculiar weight of actuality? "For there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" '(EA 143). As in all autobiography, the reality represented in the text is the narrator's construction, based on memory. Therefore, it is the writer who has brought that memory into actuality, whether it happened as the author states or never existed at all. Each individual must decide their own reality and 'see what they choose to see, and choose to see what they think they see', but in doing so, must also remember that 'The picture we cherish of our familiar world may be a thin crust for all that' (EA 130).

Memory: experiences, events, people, relationships, life, all stored in the mind. Memory is usually the principal source of raw material for the autobiographer. It can be an unconscious or conscious agent of selection, binding up our consciousness of personal identity, but often only restoring fragments of our past life. Memory is also notoriously unreliable. Most good autobiographers are aware of the fallibility of this faculty on which they are forced to rely so heavily.

As a novelist Swift is all too aware of the transience of memory and consistently exposes its workings in his first-person narrations. Through his fictional autobiographies Swift's narrators constantly swing between the past and the present, interweaving recollection with experience. In doing so, memory is shown at its most powerful, and also as an entirely untrustworthy faculty. Memory is transient, selective, arbitrary and never all-encompassing.

George Bernard Shaw once said that 'All autobiographies are lies' (Finney 22), implying that the autobiographical memory is constantly re-creating and re-constructing. In autobiography, memories are often evoked to create an idealised past. As we have seen, we also tend to project modes of present experience into the past. In support of this argument, Reed quotes James Sully, the nineteenth century author of *Illusions: A Psychological Study*:

Through the corruption of our memory, a kind of sham self gets mixed up with the real self, so that we cannot, strictly speaking, be sure that when we project a mnemonic image into the remote past we are not really running away from our true personality. (417)

Clearly, this is as pertinent in the twentieth century as it was in the nineteenth. Memory is a malleable faculty, a realm where nothing is unreal or untrue, and vice versa. For whatever reasons, an individual may 'block' certain memories, and therefore any recollection of that period is incomplete. Furthermore, even if

nothing is suppressed, the recollection can never fully encompass *everything*. Long before the numerous publications of autobiographies during the Victorian period, Laurence Sterne wrote his novel, *The Life and Opinions Of Tristram Shandy* (1759) which, in spite of its title, gave little about the life of Tristram, and nothing of the opinions. However, it succeeded in drawing attention to the futile nature of conventional autobiography: if one were to recollect the details of one's life in full, then the result would be the 'greatest shaggy-dog story in the language' (Petrie 7). Sterne pays particular attention to place, people and a natural and lifelike sequence of time. However, *Tristram Shandy* is a parodic autobiography. Sterne proposes to provide an hour's reading matter for every hour in his hero's waking life. This is, of course a futile endeavour, since it will take Tristram more than an hour to write down an account of an hour of his own experience, and so the more he writes and the more we read, the more delusive the initial endeavour. Hence, memory and autobiography can never fully capture life. Modern autobiographers assume that it is impossible to write a complete history of the self, because so much interferes with autobiography's integral element: memory. For the most part autobiographers are resigned to the impossibility of recovering their past life as it was experienced in the past. Rather, they use memory to re-create the past in the present, on the grounds that they are being true to their present conception of themselves.

As a fictional autobiography, *Ever After* is more preoccupied with the use of memory than *Shuttlecock*. Consequently, the reality of *Ever After* can be viewed

on two separate levels: the many 'realities' chosen by the characters of the novel; and the 'reality' of the story as presented by the narrators Bill and Matthew. In the tales he relates, Bill makes no claims to knowing all. In fact, he consistently admits that he 'invents', 'imagines', 'surmises', 'blurs', 'theorises', 'fictionalises', and confesses: 'I don't know that this is how it happened. It can't have been like this simply because I imagine it so' (EA 109). Disclosures such as these recall similar narrative techniques employed by John Fowles in his 1969 novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The narrator of Fowles's novel identifies himself as the author of the unfolding story, making it clear that he does not exist within the confines of the text. This enables him to point out the artificial nature of the story without destroying it. As in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, so in *Ever After* the illusionist element pointed out by the narrator in the novel does not strain our credulity because its fictionality is pointedly exposed. The reader soon forgets the narrator's signposted warnings about the illusionist quality of the story, and once again becomes immersed in the accounts of memory, and in particular, the life and drama of the Victorian Matthew Pearce.

In his article entitled 'Notes on an Unfinished Novel', John Fowles is explicit about his use of narrative technique: 'We suspect people who pretend to be omniscient ... A novel is something new. It must have relevance to the writer's now - so don't ever pretend you live in 1867; or make sure the reader knows it's a pretence' (*Novel Today* 138). Fowles leaves his readers with no doubts as to the fictitious nature of his narration, saying in chapter thirteen of *The French*

Lieutenant's Woman: 'This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind' (85). Similarly, Swift's narrator in *Ever After* expresses identical sentiments, particularly in conjunction with events concerning the life of Matthew Pearce. Bill dedicates the whole of chapter nine to a detailed narration of Matthew's encounter with an ichthyosaurus and his first introduction to the vicar's daughter, Elizabeth. Interspersed into this narration are two short excerpts from Matthew's diary, which give the reader a sense of authenticity – a sense that the text is projecting a solid, factually-based environment. We witness the reactions of all involved in the meeting of these two young people - Matthew, Elizabeth, the vicar and Matthew's father, the clock maker. The reader partakes in this privileged view of a budding romance from the Victorian past, feeling at ease with what is presented, wishing to romanticise the past. Fowles referred to this technique as an ability to lull the reader into believing 'that he is embarked on nothing more threatening than a field trip into the safely-frozen past' (*Novel Today* 139). However, the facade of the omniscient narration is shattered at the very end of this chapter with Bill's words: 'I invent all this. I don't know that this is how it happened. It can't have been like this simply because I imagine it so' (*EA* 109). Like Fowles, Swift exposes the artificiality of what he is doing and escapes the danger of being attacked as 'unreliable'. The narrative is at once credible with realistic elements (Matthew's Notebooks) and at the same time self-consciously artificial. Swift weaves a narrative that is, for the most part, an historically accurate representation of a by-gone age. He recreates a densely particularised social milieu and alludes to real

historical events and personages (Darwin, Mary Anning, the first steam engine to cross England, the Great Exhibition). This creates the illusion of solid actuality, bringing together for the reader an intensely alive world of the past. The novel tries to persuade us, not simply that versions of history are fictional, but that all conceptions of objective reality are in some sense human fabrications with no underlying solidity. Thus, the autobiographical structure of the novel is also undermined.

Ruth Unwin is an actor of immense talent (if we are to believe her husband Bill). The image of the actor/audience relationship is evoked repeatedly in *Ever After*, and thus draws attention to the problematic relationship of autobiographer to reader, which is clearly a central part of understanding the form. For the most part of our lives we create impressions and define situations as we see them, whether it be having dinner with a friend, talking on the telephone, or presenting a paper to a group of peers. Erving Goffman argues: 'When an individual appears before others, he knowingly and unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself is a part' (Goffman 241). Whether we realise it or not, our interactions with others are a kind of game, with an infinite number of concealments and discoveries hidden within distortion and fabrication. Autobiography is no different - if anything, it represents a higher level of reconstruction and dissimulation. The autobiographer is like an actor on the stage: he or she implicitly requests that the audience take seriously their impression of the world around them. In keeping with this analogy, there is also the popular

view that the actor offers his or her show for the benefit of other people. However, autobiography, unlike the theatre and everyday life, does not allow direct interaction and must therefore rely upon literary devices, such as that of the self-consciously constructed persona, to control the reader's reactions. The relationship between writer and reader is perhaps more tenuous in autobiography than in any other literature. The appearance of honesty is crucial to the reality and argument of the writing, and yet the autobiographer is a suspect witness when testifying to his own character. The reader may be able to discern the falsifications committed within the pages of an autobiography, but there can be no absolution, or interactive questioning as between an analyst and patient. If the writer uses the autobiography for answering the question 'Who Am I?', there is an increased chance of reinforcing long-held memories and conceptions of the past.

Swift's main concern in *Ever After* is to reveal the inner development of Bill Unwin and Matthew Pearce as they come to understand their individual constructions with respect to the question, 'Who am I?' However, other motivations for autobiography are also examined. When Bill remembers the last days of his mother's life, he talks of a woman with a dying urge to tell him about his ancestors and origins. After a failed suicide attempt, Bill has also faced death and takes to reading the diaries of a Victorian ancestor. This leads Bill to ponder Matthew's reasons for writing. At times Bill disagrees with Matthew's assertion

that life is 'make-belief', arguing that Matthew wrote for a reason beyond his struggle for survival:

If the soul is a fiction, and it is all just a struggle for existence, why do we ever reach beyond ourselves to the existence of others, not to say beyond existence itself? ... And why, and for whom, did Matthew write the Notebooks at all? ... For some 'kindred soul' in the audience of the future ... who unexpectedly 'identifies' ... with the plight of this 'character' up there on the stage of the past? (EA 183)

Victorians often wrote about their lives in the hope that their own struggle would be of help to a reader. Bill notes that Matthew left Burlford in 1860 and never wrote another word in his Notebooks. However, the Notebooks were not thrown away or destroyed. Bill asks: 'Is it possible that in the midst of his torment of soul ... one tiny corner of Matthew's eye was aimed at posterity? Some reader hereafter ... A small plea for non-extinction. A life beyond life' (EA 207). Matthew hints at this possibility, claiming that:

It is only the knowledge of death that breeds the desire of its transcendence. *Timor mortis conturbat me*. So one might say our need of distinction follows from our fear of extinction and all our dreams of immortality are but the transmutation of our dread. (EA 234)

According to Bill our dread of death is often eased with the birth of children. He links this to the 'death-defiers' of the world: 'To leave one's mark! To build a bridge, christen a theory, name a pear, write a book. The struggle for existence? Ha! The struggle for *remembrance*' (E.A.231). Bill joins this quest for immortality in writing his own autobiography, just as Matthew wrote his diaries. Through Bill, Swift exposes the diverse motivations behind autobiography: the need for posterity; the need to help others; the need to order the inner world; and most important of all, the need to answer the question 'Who Am I?' However, even these motives can become blurred, and as is typical of Swift, the boundaries between issues become fused. Bill writes:

Maybe it's not posterity I seek at all. Since I have already essayed the dread bourn, whereas, for most, posterity is the goal that looms ... Maybe this *is* posterity. Maybe for me it is the other way round. Maybe it's anteriority (if such a thing exists) I'm looking for. To know who I was. (EA 235)

This fusion of motives increases the author's emphasis on the narrow borders between truth and fiction. The reader can never be sure of the writer's justifications for the autobiography, even if stated. Motivations are woven into the fabric of the text, where memory and experience have become constructs of the writer's imagination.

The epigraph to this chapter states that: 'All knowing and all telling are subject to the conventions of art. [W]e can report the most particular event only in the form of a representational fiction'. Graham Swift's novels *Shuttlecock* and *Ever After* reflect this theory, reinforcing it with each novel's independent structure: the use of autobiography within autobiography. *Shuttlecock* presents Prentis, who attempts to come to terms with his existence and relationship to the world around him by consulting his father's autobiography *Shuttlecock: the Story of a Secret Agent*. Dad's book draws the reader's attention to the narrow boundaries between fact and fiction, and to the ease with which both can be constructed. *Ever After* is concerned more with the faculty of memory, its transient and unreliable nature as experiences of the past are re-created and even re-invented. Also crucial to the form of autobiography, and investigated by Swift in his novels, are the motives of the writer. Swift explores the possibilities of writing to aid others in their struggles; writing for posterity and remembrance; writing to perform, or convince the reader that the 'actor's' show is 'real'; and most importantly, writing in order to answer the question 'Who Am I?' Behind these arguments lies an emphasis on the importance of interpretation, not just in the art of autobiography, but in life. The reader must interpret the writings of Prentis and Bill who, in turn, interpret the writings of Dad and Matthew. Hence, Quinn's question of Prentis, 'What's true, Prentis, tell me: what really happens or what people will accept as true?' (S 89), and Bill's observation that each individual must 'See what they choose to see, and choose to see what they think they see' (EA 79). Truth and reality are evasive, subjective elements which can never be

fully understood. It is impossible to achieve self-knowledge. For the narrators of *Shuttlecock* and *Ever After*, past, present and future merge as the narrators come to accept the 'truths' of their lives and the impossibility of searching for what can never be found. Like the first verse of Eliot's *Wasteland* ('Memory and desire, stirring/Dull roots with spring rain') Swift implies that there is no future for those who do not confront fabricated memories and desires. 'Spring rain' brings acceptance that nothing can ever be known.

CHAPTER TWO

CIRCULARITY IN
THE NOVELS OF
GRAHAM SWIFT:
WATERLAND AND
LAST ORDERS

Once again on the main pier at Orly, in the middle of this hot, pre-war Sunday afternoon where he was now able to settle down, he thought, in a confused way, that the child he had once been was doomed to be there too, watching the planes. But first of all he looked for a woman's face at the end of the pier.

He ran towards her, and when he recognised the man who had trailed him since the camp, he knew there was no way out of time, and he knew that this haunted moment he had been granted to see as a child, was the moment of his own death.

La Jettee (The Pier). A film by Chris Marker, 1963.

The circle has long been a symbol provoking and representing notions of perfection, constancy and eternity. Men and women have been ruled by the cyclical movements of nature since time immemorial: the movement of the earth and moon, the seasons of nature, and the most important of all, the cycle of life and death. In the twentieth century the notion of circularity has expanded into a more encompassing concept. We talk of 'going round in circles' (returning to a designated starting point); the 'vicious circle' (this involves an unbroken sequence of cause and effect); and, finally, the idea of 'circling back', (a wide looping movement towards the starting point.). These are all themes which constitute and form the structure of Graham Swift's novels, themes which provide

the circular casing of a kaleidoscope which in turn, houses the perpetually whirling shapes and colours of complex beauty and intricate fusion.

Just as the kaleidoscope viewer twists the cylinder to reveal startling combinations of colour, so Swift's readers piece together the cyclical patterns of his novels. In all six of Swift's novels (*The Sweet Shop Owner*, *Shuttlecock*, *Waterland*, *Out of this World*, *Ever After* and *Last Orders*) the respective narrators move through time in a circular manner: from present to past, and a return to the present. This is achieved through recollections of the past, memories of good times, but usually of times unnerving and haunting: the torture of a pet hamster; a murder and teenage abortion; a mother-son relationship with oedipal leanings; a young man who marries a woman and strikes a bargain: he will give her peace of mind, she will give him a daughter and a sweet shop. This constant circular movement of memory is framed by the very structure of Swift's novels (in particular *The Sweet Shop Owner* and *Waterland*): the end of the narration is the beginning, and the beginning, the end. In many ways this is similar to the manipulation of time in science fiction time-travel films and other, more recent developments in cinema. Time travellers are celebrated for 'coming full circle', from present to future, to past and back to present time. We know this circular structure is a given in such films, yet knowledge and answers to key questions consistently elude the protagonist. Post-modern metafiction shares similar attributes, and like these films inherently promotes the impossibility of knowing reality.

The most insightful and prevalent themes of circularity exist in *Waterland* and the Booker Prize winning *Last Orders*. This chapter will focus partly on Swift's employment of 'Natural History' in *Waterland*, the linked histories of man and nature, Fen reclamation, echoes of the Bible's *Book of Ecclesiastes* and even influences of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. It will also focus on *Last Orders*, the most intricate of Swift's novels: here it is Swift's use of a passage from Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial*, used as an epigraph for *Last Orders*, that provides the strongest indication that the novel is primarily about the circle of life and death.

Metafictional novels like Swift's often expose a circularity of their own, and like *La Jetée* and recent films of circular structure, metafictional work inherently promotes the notion that truth and reality can never be attained. Patricia Waugh writes:

Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systemically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (2)

Thus, metafictional works inevitably come full circle as the author exposes the fragility of his or her own text. For example, the author produces a text that questions the validity and accuracy of representing reality. In doing this, the writer draws attention to the self-reflexive nature of his or her argument: as the author attempts to depict the impossibility of representing reality, it becomes apparent that the work in question is also a fabricated and contrived piece of reality, no closer to 'truth' than the 'reality' of the text in question. In laying bare their own processes of artificial construction, metafictional texts suggest the ways in which our sense of reality is similarly fabricated. Reality is an impossibility: it is in constant, whirling motion. The circular theme of the unattainable reality is inherent in Swift's work, with other powerful images of circularity interwoven throughout, reinforcing memory and stories as discourses incapable of representing truth.

Themes and images of circularity form the basis of the intense history of the Cricks and the surrounding Fenlands in *Waterland*. The most explicit and reiterated themes in *Waterland* are the linked histories of man and nature. Interspersed among the histories of the Atkinsons, Tom Crick's childhood and the French Revolution, are passages describing the Fens, the reclamation process, and the rivers and ducts that link and interweave throughout this land. Swift writes: 'The chief fact about the Fens is that they are reclaimed land, land that was once water and which even today, is not quite solid' (W 7). On the surface, Tom Crick's narration can be interpreted as a rendering of the scientific facts and

figures of the land, but this is a story where nothing can be taken for granted. The use of Natural History is like the 'bruise upon a bruise' on the dead Freddy Parr's forehead; we must look closely if we are to examine what is beneath. It is possible to see descriptions of the Fen landscape as a metaphor for Tom's past, each river or tributary representing a part of his history, flowing, not to the 'ever-diminishing Wash', but to the ever-diminishing future. This creates an indeterminate tension between what the narrator terms 'Natural History' and 'Artificial History'. Despite his career in school teaching Crick is very much caught up in the concept of Natural History, not as a biology lesson, but as something 'Which doesn't go anywhere. Which cleaves to itself. Which perpetually travels back to where it came from' (*W* 155).

If we accept the rivers and tributaries in *Waterland* as a metaphor for Tom's past, then we may also see history not as past knowledge, but as present knowledge always contributing to the future. History is indeed a process of reclamation; we must dredge the past in order to discover who we are today. Our past, collective or individual, is perpetually with us; it leaves its mark on our every present act. We see this in *Waterland* with Tom and Mary, but with Mary especially, her early sexual encounters and teenage abortion ultimately contributing to the kidnapping of the child at the Safeway supermarket.

Throughout the novel Swift uses the natural history of the Fens as a metaphor in order to comment on the issue of history in general. In chapter three, entitled

'About the Fens', the instability of the land is emphasised, along with the eternal process of land reclamation. The narrator says: 'The Fens are still being reclaimed even to this day. Strictly speaking, they are never reclaimed, only being reclaimed' (*W* 7). History is also a process of reclamation; we look to the past in order to explain the present and yet we can never totally understand or recover the past. Chapter twenty-seven states that natural history 'doesn't go anywhere...[it] perpetually travels back to itself' (*W* 155). This is reinforced by Crick's later statement that history, in general, 'repeats itself...goes back on itself, no matter how we try to straighten it out... it goes in circles and brings us back to the same place' (*W* 107). The reader witnesses this repetition in Tom's story of his childhood, particularly in the visualisation of Freddie Parr's death and an earlier swimming expedition: 'Dick; Freddie Parr; their stares...A bottle hurled into the muddy Lode; Dick on the wooden bridge; Freddie in the water... Now who says history doesn't go in circles?' (*W* 157). Through his descriptions of the Fens and their constantly changing landscape, Crick draws attention to the fact that despite revolutions, the 'building of empires' and other important events in text books, we should look to the land in order to understand history:

So forget indeed your revolutions, your turning points, your grand metamorphosis of history. Consider, instead, the slow and arduous process, the interminable process - the process of human siltation - of land reclamation. (*W* 7-8)

The idea that people live and die, while the natural world continues almost unaltered, is certainly not a new one. Many of *Waterland*'s central concerns can be found in the *Book of Ecclesiastes*. Crick gives the reader an in-depth history of his Fen family and ancestors and we see that despite the Atkinson brewery, the industry it generates and the good name the Atkinsons make for themselves, the Fens continue to be dredged. This is echoed in the words of the *Ecclesiastes* preacher, 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever' (1:4). The circular nature of the world is at the heart of the *Ecclesiastes* philosophy: 'All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again' (1:7). Clearly this is also the major underlying motif in *Waterland*. In chapter fifteen, 'About the Ouse', Swift traces the history of the River Ouse and other subsidiary rivers in the Fens. He makes a distinct correlation between Natural History and the message of *Ecclesiastes*:

The Ouse flows on... as every river must, to the sea. And, as we all know, the sun and the wind suck up the water from the sea and disperse it on the land, perpetually refeeding the rivers. So that while the Ouse flows to the sea, it flows, in reality, like all rivers, only back to itself, to its own source. (W 110)

The cyclic nature of the land and the world in general is emphasised in *Ecclesiastes* and illustrated in *Waterland*. Through his many and varied stories

Tom discovers the cyclic nature of history and in many respects, the futility of history, and even life. Like the preacher in *Ecclesiastes*, Tom sees the 'vanity' in life and recognises the idea that no event or occurrence is new: 'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun' (1:9). This is drawn to the reader's attention in the chapter entitled 'About the Eel'. Like the land, the eel has a cyclic existence; it is conceived in the sea and returns to the sea to die. But the eel has no history; there are no dates to mark its progress, except those that are imposed by humans. This further emphasises that we cannot know everything about the past, or indeed about the present.

On a more literal level the Fens, as a landscape, have contributed greatly to the shaping of peoples' lives. This lends validity to Tom's assertion that the flat Fens encourage early sexual activity:

Baked mud smells, river smells, a hot blue sky, a warm wind... Not to mince matters... sexuality reveals itself more readily, more precociously in a flat land, in a land of watery prostration, than in say, a mountainous or forested landscape... (W 137)

The importance of the Fen landscape in the shaping of people's lives and beliefs is further emphasised when we examine the parallels between *Waterland* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. The epigraph of *Waterland* says: 'Ours

was the marsh country...'. This quotation is from the first page of *Great Expectations*, and the dots following Swift's epigraph encourage a fuller reading. Swift may indeed be referring to the low-lying, watery nature of the marsh country and the equally uncertain character of history, however, it seems more probable that he is asking us to examine further the parallels between *Waterland* and Dickens' novel. *Waterland* shows how the Fens have formed the lives of the people who live there; Tom examines the Natural History of the land and inadvertently, its impact on his own life. The opening chapter of *Great Expectations*, especially the paragraph beginning, 'Ours was the marsh country...', reveals the important role the landscape of Pip's birth plays in the forming of his life and character. The third paragraph of the opening chapter of this book describes Pip's homeland as he sits amongst the graves of his parents and five brothers:

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river ... One afternoon ... I found out for certain that ... the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers beginning to cry, was Pip.

(15)

This is one of Pip's earliest memories and the natural land formations are emphasised. Pip displays a consciousness of his own personal history, a listing of his dead relatives and an awareness of himself and his place in history. This is particularly evident in Pip's use of the third person when referring to himself: 'the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip'. However, in order to arrive at this point of self-realisation Pip must first come to terms with the landscape of his childhood, hence the descriptions of the marshlands, entwined with a brief history of the Pirrip family. *Waterland's* Tom Crick develops in a similar manner; he must confront the landscape of his birth and childhood in order to realise and understand who he is in the present.

The use of the fairy-tale motif in both *Great Expectations* and *Waterland* (discussed further in Chapter Three: The Use of the Fairy Tale in Swift's Novels) can be attributed to the influence of the landscape on the lives of the people who live there. On the opening page of *Waterland* Tom says of his father's explanation concerning the goodness in people, 'Fairy-tale words; fairy-tale advice. But we lived in a fairy-tale place' (*W* 1). Tom constantly returns to this 'fairy-tale place' in the course of his narration, referring not just to the events that occurred there, but also to the 'flat... watery prostrat[ed]' land itself. Many of his stories stem from the direct influence of the land, the water, the mist and the stars, and can be seen as a way of grounding his own personal story. However, despite their comforting role, fairy-tales are an escape from reality and we see Tom escape from the reality of his own personal story by returning to the

superstition and language of his father's fairy-tales. Just as Tom's father grounds his children in the language of superstition and fairy-tale, so Tom continues this tradition by applying it to the land. As he intimates, the rolling mist, the flat bleakness and watery nature of the Fens invite superstition, belief in ghosts and fairy-tales, just as the marsh country helps form Pip's conception of Magwitch as some kind of horrific apparition appearing from the 'dark, flat wilderness beyond the churchyard' (Dickens 16).

The battle to reclaim the watery Fens can also be seen as another voicing of the age-old struggle between human nature and the environment. However, Tom's struggle is with the past. The people of the Fens have always told stories about their superstitions: 'When you see a new moon, turn your money in your pocket; help someone to salt and help them to sorrow; never put new shoes on a table or cut your nails on a Sunday' (W 14). Tom Crick is no exception; his parents have revealed to him that telling stories can shake off the past. History can be turned into a fairy tale, a story, providing an escape from the reality of the past; yet we can never be sure of the true nature of that reality. In order to come to terms with his past, Tom tells stories, and must also do the same with the natural history of his homeland, a place which has inadvertently shaped his stories and his life. Tom's references to the Fens as a 'fairy-tale land' directly follow passages clearly dedicated to Natural History description. Thus, the narrator draws the reader's attention to the juxtaposition between fact and fiction. As the novel progresses we realise that all history is open to interpretation and a Fenland fairy-tale often

offers as much, if not more, insight into the past. It is also made clear that each person's individual history constitutes many different elements of story-telling; natural history, text-book history, family history and even fairy tales.

However, all this is only a fraction of the purpose of Natural History in *Waterland*. There are further complexities, especially in the tension between what the narrator terms Natural History and Artificial History. In a specific discussion on Natural History Tom says:

What is this - a biology lesson?

No I prefer, in order to point a contrast, to call it Natural History. Which doesn't go anywhere. Which cleaves to itself. Which perpetually travels back to where it came from... Natural History, human nature. (W 55)

In contrast, we are told Artificial History is the art of taking notes, being 'historically observant', objective, interpreting cause and effect, having a precise and succinct answer to the question 'Why?' Thus, the narrator appears to be saying that Natural History is one's own personal history, not the artificial history which is foreign to personal reality. 'Natural History, human nature' can be seen as the events of the past which make up a person; we want to know where we come from, who we are, and yet no matter how many times we invoke the question 'Why?', we never truly receive an answer, for Natural History is something 'which doesn't go anywhere. Which cleaves to itself. Which

perpetually travels back to where it came from' (*W* 155). Natural History is like the cyclic existence of the eel; like the essence of the French Revolution which replaces one ruling class with another; like a circle which has no beginning and no end. Artificial History - the stuff of the classroom and history books - makes the past palatable, 'Reality made plain. Reality with no nonsense. Reality cut down to size' (*W* 155). But true reality cannot be divided into dates, causes, effects and precise reasons, just as Tom Crick's narration cannot be examined for one single cause or act which has brought about his present situation and state of mind.

In the final paragraph of this chapter Tom says, 'Children, be curious... People have to find out, people have to know' (*W* 155). If we do not discover our Natural History then there are dire consequences. For instance, Dick has been denied access to his Natural History through illiteracy and perhaps more fundamentally, the power to ask 'Why?', until confronted by the here and now of Mary and her games of sexuality. Tom says in the final line of this chapter, 'How can there be any revolution until we know what we're made of?' (*W* 155), again emphasising the need to embrace the history of our personal past; we cannot truly embrace the future until we know where we have come from; until we reconcile it with the Here and Now; with our 'love of life... this stuff we're always coming back to' (*W* 155). Natural History 'which cleaves to itself. Which perpetually travels back to where it came from' seems to be the history and memories which make up each one of us, 'the thing that takes us back either via catastrophe and confusion or in

our heart's desire, to where we were' (*W* 103). We can delve into the past and no matter what has happened, it has to be and always will be a part of us.

Natural History can also be seen as autobiography; reclaiming one's own story from the past. This corresponds with references to the landscape of the Fens: 'The Fens are still being reclaimed even to this day. Strictly speaking they are never reclaimed, only being reclaimed' (*W* 7). Autobiography claims the personal past from nature and time, and, as discussed in Chapter One, is indeed a natural phenomenon; that is, we all formulate our lives by contextualising the past and its relation to who we are today. But once again autobiography, like the draining of the Fens, can never achieve more than a temporary victory for the simple reason that both these projects are carried out within Time, and eventually Time must win. Time wears through land and autobiography, making the acts of one's life irrelevant, obsolete or forgotten.

The circularity of Natural History, with its capacity for personal discovery, can be seen as something positive in *Waterland*. Swift successfully illustrates the dire consequences of never trying to come to terms with Natural History. Tom says, of Dick, 'Not a hope for the future... never asks questions, doesn't want to know. Forgets tomorrow what he's told today' (*W* 241). Thus, when Dick is confronted with the circumstances of his conception, the identity of his true father and the biological relationship of his parents, he is unable to cope. He cannot see or accept the past, the present or his own place in history. Dick is denied access to

his natural history through Henry Crick's refusal to allow him literacy and a share in Henry's own personal history. Unfortunately, 'fairy-tale words' and 'fairy-tale advice' are not enough for survival in the world of reality. Perhaps Tom realises the terrible consequences of this denial when he says, 'People have to find out. People have to know' (W 155).

For Tom Crick, history is a matter of asking questions, of seeking to understand 'Why?' Natural History, on the other hand, recognises things for what they are. Like the Book of Ecclesiastes it sees through the myth of progress and the fictitious hypothesis of historical science; it accepts rather than questions, recognising - and not resisting - the circularity and cyclical character of the human and natural condition. Natural History in *Waterland* is a complex issue involving both literal and metaphoric interpretations. Graham Swift draws attention to the role of Natural History through the very title of his novel and through his epigraph from Dickens' *Great Expectations*. However, Swift directs our attention to the role of Natural History through the narrator Tom Crick. We see the importance of Natural History in the formation of the Fenlands, the people who live in this particular landscape, the narrator himself and even the reader, who must, in the course of the novel, examine his or her own role in the world of Natural and Artificial History.

In Swift's Booker Prize-winning novel *Last Orders*, history and the circularity of life feature again, as in the earlier *Waterland*. *Last Orders* tells the story of four

men who make a journey, both universal and personal, to Margate in order to carry out the last request of their friend, Jack Dodds. Jack wished to have his ashes scattered over the sea at Margate, and Amy, Jack's wife, has declined to join them. Although the novel's span of time is just one day, in typical Swift fashion, the characters move between time as they remember Jack and the course of their own lives. The circularity of life and death is a significant theme in this masterpiece, for it inherently exposes a message about how to live, how to die, and how to make connections between the two.

According to Swift, *Last Orders* is a novel about 'taking stock'. The story is told by seven alternating voices: five male, two female; six alive and one dead. Ray (Lucky) Johnson is the main narrator, but the voices of Vince Dodds, Vic Tucker, Lenny Tate, Amy Dodds, Mandy Dodds and even the deceased Jack Dodds are also heard. At times, these characters think some deep philosophical thoughts, but are usually not aware of their own profundity. Graham Swift explains this in a radio interview:

We all think very deep things even if we don't actually voice them...[*Last Orders*] is set on this very special day in which four men are honouring their dead friend, and under the pressure of this special day a lot comes up to the surface, which would normally just be lying there. (Swift, National Radio, *Kim Hill NTN* 22 October 1996).

Like Tom Crick, the characters of *Last Orders* reflect upon their lives and relationships by telling stories. The reader must, for the most part, discern the deeper meaning of these stories. As he or she does so, it becomes clear that surrounding the memories of Jack Dodds, butcher, friend, husband and father, the narrators also address the larger issues of their lives: relationships, friendship, living and dying.

The title of the Swift's latest novel has strong connections with T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. In the second part of the poem, 'A Game of Chess', the capitalised cries of the publican are heard: 'HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME'. These words are quietly resonating in the background of the opening chapter of *Last Orders* as Ray, Vince, Lenny and Vic gather at the Coach and Horses before beginning their journey to Margate. It is time for them to leave the pub, but more importantly it is time to farewell their old friend. The time has also come for them to make decisions and new beginnings to their lives.

Significantly, *Last Orders* has something in common with *The Waste Land*. The circular themes of birth, death and regeneration occur in both. In the recurring Fisher King myth, Eliot recalls the Grail story of a land laid to waste, made barren and sterile by the illness and wounding of the Fisher King. A knight in quest of the Holy Grail can fulfil his quest only if able to ask or answer certain questions correctly. Only then will the king be restored and the land renewed by the coming of rain. Swift presents a modern day London and with it, another version

of the Fisher King myth, a version in which the King is dispersed amongst the disillusioned and wounded souls of the working class. Each of the characters in *Last Orders* has lost sight of what is important in life. Like *The Waste Land*, *Last Orders* looks at the deepest fears, secrets, anguish and desires of speakers who find in the world confirmation of these feelings. Characters in both masterpieces contemplate the death and decay in life. However, Eliot's narrators and the characters of *Last Orders* instinctively sense another life, which is defined through ideals of rebirth and regeneration. As they contemplate death and the failings of their lives, the friends and family of Jack Dodds discover that they must form their own questions and answers if they are to fulfil a quest for their personal Holy Grail.

The first sentence of *The Waste Land* ends in line four with the word 'rain', the stimulus for a new generation. Rain is also symbolic of new beginnings and regeneration in *Last Orders*. Rain threatens to fall during the entire day of the trip to Margate, also mentioned in *The Waste Land*. Tension mounts between the comparatively young Vince and older Lenny as Lenny remembers Vince's treatment of his daughter Sally, and even of Jack who adopted Vince as a baby and treated him like a son. When the men stop at the place of Jack and Amy's hop-picking days, tension spills over with Lenny punching Vince with the words: 'That's for Sally ... And that's for Jack' (LO 148). The two men wrestle and punch until they are exhausted and ashamed of their behaviour. Ray moves back from the two, saying, 'The ground smells of spring, the air smells of winter. Then

there's a dash of rain' (LO 151). Although rain does not fall in *The Waste Land*, the reader knows that when the clouds open, renewal will begin. Lenny and Vince have confronted each other, the rain has fallen and a new beginning can be made: Lenny recognises his own mistreatment of Sally, and Vince realises that he has treated his daughter Katherine, worse than he did Sally. Both men make resolutions for the future.

Once again the skies become clear, but only until the scattering of Jack's ashes from Margate pier. Vic declares, 'It's not a passing shower. It's dirty weather setting in.' (LO 287). As the men progress along the pier Ray looks up, and comments:

And as we carry on it's like the rain decides it's time it fell proper at last ... either the wind takes away some of the weight of the rain or the rain cuts through the force of the wind, because it's like with the rain everything gets softer, safer, like we're in the thick and there's nothing more that can be chucked at us now ... the waves don't look so angry any more, and maybe Vic was wrong about it not being a passing shower because low down in the sky in the distance, inland, there's a faint thin gleam. We choose our moments. (LO 290-291)

The rain has indeed brought renewal for each of the characters, and as Ray realises, 'We choose our moments'. He is making plans to visit his daughter in

Australia and perhaps asking Amy to accompany him. What begins as private fears, memories and dreams ends with a more significant recognition of life's circularity and the value of living. These men have not discovered the meaning of life, but have encountered surprising assurances along the way, assurances which have enabled them to make choices. The last voice in *The Waste Land* is in a similar situation at the close of the poem. He has moved beyond musing upon the death of father and wreck of brother: he sees that he must take in hand that which he can control. In accepting his role as Fisher King, he confronts the sea, instead of the limited, land-locked 'dull canal'. Neither *Last Orders* nor *The Waste Land* offers reasons or answers to life, but as the waste land awaits regeneration, Eliot offers a final key to the possibility of living which equally applies to Ray, Vince, Lenny, Vic and Amy: 'Shantih, shantih, shantih', 'The peace which passeth understanding'.

To aid the reader in understanding the Bermondsey narrations, Swift has included two epigraphs for *Last Orders*, one of which simply states: 'I do like to be beside the seaside' (John A. Glover-Kind), and the other, a quotation lifted from Sir Thomas Browne's seventeenth century *Urn Burial*: 'But man is a Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave'. Although Swift places a full stop at the end of this quotation, it is in fact only half of the original. In full the excerpt reads:

Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising Nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting Ceremonies of bravery, in the infamy of his nature. (Browne 169)

Here, Browne appears to say that men and women celebrate birth and death with the same reverence. He implies that this is a weakness in human nature, and that death should not be held in as high regard as birth and living. This theme is adopted by Swift in *Last Orders*, but the reader must discover and interpret the significance of what is said within the pages of the novel, for the world of the deceased Jack and his mates is of the working class, beer drinking, pub-going kind where disclosures of this nature are not acknowledged.

Browne's ultimate message lies in his contention that monuments and memorials are not a reflection of our lives. Rather, the memories people hold of us and our deeds are of more value. Once these memories have gone, along with the people who hold them, so we too must die. Sir Thomas argues that monuments leave only meaningless names; there is nothing of the person left but a name, and perhaps the mention of a deed which can never reflect the person who once lived. To erect monuments, obelisks, memorials and pyramids is a vain folly, for when we die we merge again with the earth and the wind. The circularity of life and death is unavoidable and certainly beyond our control. However, according to Browne, we must learn to value the circle of life more than the inevitability of death. Browne contends that living is what truly matters; life is what holds the

ultimate value, and the human race should concentrate on this rather than the vainglory of immortality.

On closer reading it is clear that Swift has adopted many of the themes prevalent in Browne's work. Like *Urn Burial*, *Last Orders* mentions many different types of 'burial' and ways of remembering the dead. Cremation, pyramids, memorials, monuments, obelisks, burial at sea and the scattering of ashes are all contemplated by the various characters of the novel. Victor Tucker is the character closest to death and its trappings, for he is the undertaker of Bermondsey. However, Vic is not a man to be brought down by such an occupation. This is subtly indicated by Swift in his choice of name: 'Victor', a winner in battle or contest, is mortal, but has beaten death amongst the living by accepting his role in preparing the dead. Vic says:

It's not a trade many would choose. You have to be raised to it, father to son. It runs in the family, like death itself runs in the human race, and there's comfort in that. The passing on. (LO 78)

Vic is the peacekeeper and the most sensible of the Margate-bound group. In a way he is also a modern day Charon, escorting Jack's ashes to the next world, just as he has prepared hundreds before: 'I know about what you fear ... I know about the dead, I know about dead people, and I know that the sea is all around us anyway ... All in our berths going to our deaths' (LO 125). This is a prevalent

theme in both *Last Orders* and *Urn Burial*: we are all in the same boat, but must make ourselves busy with learning the art of sailing, rather than aid the ship in sinking.

Along the journey to Margate the men make a number of unplanned stops: two pubs, the Chatham Naval War Memorial, the site of Jack and Amy's hop-picking days, the Canterbury Cathedral, and finally, the Margate Pier. The seemingly simple cycle of life and death becomes blurred as the men wander about these structures and places. They realise that it is not just the question of Jack's scattered ashes, but also the memories of him and their own lives that engross them. In the course of these stops a number of issues are confronted, initiated by the nature of the particular stop. For example, at the Chatham Naval War Memorial, Ray, the horse race follower, says:

You can't tell nothing by looking at the lists because there aren't no odds quoted ... All you can tell by looking down the lists, and it don't matter that they're set in bronze on a white wall on top of a hill with an obelisk stuck in front an' all, is that a man is just a name. Which means something to him it attaches to, and anyone who deals, same way, in the span of a human life, but it don't mean a monkey's beyond that. (LO 127-128)

This notion almost certainly derives from Browne's *Urn Burial*:

But to subsist in bones, and be but Pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitlesse continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as Emblemes of mortall vanities; Antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and madding vices ... 'Tis too late to be ambitious ... To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our belief ... [This] consideration ... maketh Pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment. (165-166)

The manner in which to approach, and not approach, death is clearly delineated in both texts. In *Last Orders* this is implicitly juxtaposed to the death of Jack Dodds. There are to be no memorials erected to this man, not even a gravestone. Rather, his ashes are scattered by his friends who carry the memory of him within. Without memories, there are only names. Swift makes this abundantly clear at the close of Ray's account of the Naval Memorial stop. As the men descend the hill and exit the gates, Ray comments: 'The gates are painted blue. Over the top it says, "All These Were Honoured in Their Generation and Were the Glory of Their Times" '(LO 127). Now, they are mere names on a wall.

The theme of human mortality and the uselessness of human greatness is also reminiscent of Percy Bysshe Shelley's (1792-1822) poem, 'Ozymandias' in which there is an enormous statue pictured lying in the Egyptian desert, bearing the inscription: 'I am Ozymandias, king of kings: / Look on my works ye mighty and despair!' (10-11). The notion of a monarch once so powerful and self-assured in his immortality, inspired the poet to write about the ultimate futility of human greatness:

Near [the statue], on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed; ...(3-8)
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away. (12-14)

'Ozymandias' pre-figures sentiments expressed in *Last Orders*. Ozymandias, the 'king of kings', can no longer inspire fear and desperation in the hearts of those who encounter his works. There is no one to remember his deeds or his person and he is therefore committed to oblivion, just as those of the distant past and those of the present, who are not born to greatness, die without building

monuments to their lives. Despite the unusual name on the statue in Shelley's poem in the end it is just a name, just as the names on the Chatham war memorial are nothing but names to those who did not know them.

This is clearly the over-riding theme of Browne's *Urn Burial*. Browne writes:

Who knows whether the best of men be known? or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favour of the everlasting Register the first man had been as unknown as the last. (167)

Swift also asks these same questions and addresses similar issues. Jack's death means much to those who knew him, but to the greater world, very little. It is Vic, the undertaker who knows this well. He says of his friend:

But Jack's not special, he's not special at all ... He's just one of many now. In life there are differences, you make distinctions ... but the dead are the dead, I've watched them, they're equal. It's what makes all men equal for ever and always. There's only one sea. (LO 143)

This is emphasised at the Canterbury Cathedral. As Vince, Lenny, Ray and Vic wander about examining the sites, Vic comments: 'Well Jack, if it's any consolation ... we had you rubbing shoulders, so to speak, with the Black Prince'

(LO 206). 'The Black Prince, Edward Plantagenet, son of Edward the Third' is nothing but a string of facts and a monument to be stared at by tourists. Jack Dodds, the butcher from Bermondsey is now on equal footing with royalty. The preacher of *Ecclesiastes* pre-empted both Swift and Browne with the words: 'There is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever: seeing that which is now in the days to come shall be forgotten' (2:16). Jack and the Black Prince are equals. Both Swift and Browne argue that the one phenomenon remaining constant in the circle of life and death is that 'there is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end'. (Browne, 168). Again, this echoes *Ecclesiastes*: 'There is no remembrance of former things; neither that are to come with those that shall come after' (1:11). As in previous novels, Swift maintains that nothing can ever truly be known. In *Last Orders* this message manifests itself in the form of Jack's death and his friends' reflections upon life. There is no way to ensure that someone will live forever; there is no way in which to keep more than the memory of a name alive.

During the Canterbury Cathedral sojourn the importance of memory as opposed to monuments is again brought to the attention of the reader. Vic rattles off the many material ways in which the human race has attempted to recall the dead and those who have died, as if he is standing on a street corner attracting the attention of tourists: 'Tombs, effigies, crypts, whole chapels ... They got kings and queens in here, they got saints ... They got cardinals ... They got nineteen archbishops'(LO 197). He then recalls saying to Jack, 'You ever thought what

you'd want, Jack?' Jack had jokingly replied with: 'Ooh, I don't know if you'd be up to it, Vic. I'm thinking big. I reckon nothing short of a pyramid' (LO 206). We know that Jack's last wishes were far more humble than a pyramid, but this statement serves to recall Jack and Ray's time in the desert during World War II. One of Ray's strongest memories of Jack is the day he proposed a rendezvous in a whorehouse in Egypt. Ray, a virgin, is reluctant, and suggests a visit to the pyramids. Jack is astounded and cajoles Ray with the words: 'Pyramids are tombs, aren't they Ray? Pyramids are for dead people. Whereas a tart's a tackle' (LO 89). Despite the crassness of his words, Jack makes it clear that the world is for the living, not for pondering the dead.

This is a recurring theme in *Last Orders*, and once again derived from the words of Sir Thomas Browne:

While some have studied Monuments, others have studiously declined them: and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their Graves ... Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next, who when they dye, make no commotion among the dead. (170)

As he stands at the top of the Chatham Naval War Memorial, Ray recognises the importance and value of living in the present. While holding the ashes of his dead friend, and gazing at the hundreds of names, Ray arrives at a decision:

There's only one lesson to be drawn, it's as cheery as it's not cheery, and that's that it ain't living you're doing, they call it living, it's surviving.

But I reckon I could do it, I could still turn it into living again. I could forget the larger mathematics and take the gamble. Live a little, live again. See them grandchildren of mine, if there are any, the ones who'll survive me.

In the surviving years of my life. (LO 128)

Ray is not the only character to choose life and make plans for the future. Lenny recognises his ill treatment of his daughter Sally and decides he will visit her. Vince realises that he has abused his role as father to daughter Kath, using her as a kind of prostitute for the sale of his cars. Even Amy, Jack's widow, makes a momentous decision to no longer visit the retarded June, but make plans for her own life, despite her husband's death. In the one chapter, or passage, dedicated to Jack, he poignantly draws attention to the value and importance of life. Always the butcher, he seemingly explains to the reader the finer points of running a good business. We know, however, that this man's meaning runs deeper and applies to life: 'What you've got to understand is the nature of the goods. Which is perishable' (LO 285). Jack is a man who, in the words of Sir

Thomas Browne, made 'no commotion among the dead' and spent his life living, not 'study[ing] monuments'.

The most binding of philosophies between *Last Orders* and *Urn Burial* is the importance of memory over the more physical and material ways of remembering the dead. Life and death are a circular process according to Browne:

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortall right-lined circle¹ must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the *Opium* of time, which temporally considereth all things; Our Fathers finde their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. (166)

In some ways this excerpt explains the stop Vince makes at the place of Jack and Amy's hop-picking days. This diversion is far more moving for Vince than any Naval Memorial or cathedral dedicated to the dead or the great. The deserted hill-top provides memories of Jack. As Vince unscrews the cap all he can say through the tears is, 'This is where ... This is where' (*LO* 151). The local watering hole, the Coach and Horses at Bermondsey, the site of Jack and Amy's hop-picking days, and the pier and jetty at Margate all form landmarks in the memory of Jack's life. Swift implicitly suggests that these memories are what is important and constitute the quarters of the life and death circle. Amy recognises

¹ Historically 'the mortall right-lined circle' is recognised as the character of death.

this as she reflects on the journey the men are making: 'They'll be there now, where we might have gone. Ended up or started again. New people, old people, the same people' (LO 267). Amy has no need to even scatter Jack's ashes; she has said her goodbyes. Ashes and gravestones are irrelevant for only memory remains: 'I'll always see his face, I'll always see Jack's face, like a little photo in my head. Like a person never dies in the mind's eye' (LO 267).

By the end of their journey to Margate, the friends of Jack Arthur Dodds have all, in their own individual ways, acknowledged that life is living, and once the dead have gone there is nothing. Browne expresses these same sentiments in words that would astound these men of Bermondsey: 'The brother of death daily haunts us with dying *momentos*, and time that grows old itself, bids us hope no long duration: Diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation' (168). Jack's friends harbour no false hopes about living forever, even in memory. In their own way they recognise that:

Darknesse and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings ... Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. All was vanity, feeding the winde and folly. (168)

'All was vanity' is clearly an echo of the opening verse of *Ecclesiastes*. The Preacher's words continue to resound both in *Urn Burial* and *Last Orders*.

Following this paragraph, Browne states, 'In vain, do individuals hope for Immortality', for we must return to the earth, the water and the wind, and leave a trace of our beings in the fragile memories of others. The scattering of Jack's ashes signifies the traditional return to the earth. As the four friends stand on Margate pier, gazing out to the raging sea, Ray comments, 'The sky and the sea and the wind are all mixed up together' (LO 294). So too are we, and as the wind takes the ash, Ray closes with the words:

the ash that I carried in my hands, which was the Jack who once walked around, is carried away by the wind, is whirled away by the wind till the ash becomes the wind and the wind becomes Jack what we're made of. (LO 295)

Swift, like the seventeenth-century Browne, represents life as a cycle: the inevitable movement from birth to death, with an enormous amount of living in between. As individuals, we can never achieve immortality, but we can leave behind memories, and memories are created through living. According to Swift, life is like Jack's ashes in the wind: 'The wind takes it, it's gone in a whirl, in a flash' (LO 294). The Preacher of *Ecclesiastes* also philosophises about humanity's journey from birth to death, saying: 'For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten' (9:5). Like Swift, the Preacher reveals that one should not live life to die, but to enjoy 'the voice of the bird' and the 'flourish' of an

almond tree, for only after living can 'the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit return unto God who gave it' (12:7-10). In the course of their journey to Margate, Swift's characters recognise this process and the importance of listening to the 'voice of the bird' and accordingly make plans for their own whirling lives.

Swift's adoption of an excerpt from Browne's *Urn Burial* for the epigraph of *Last Orders* furthers the themes of the novel: the cyclical nature of life; the importance of memory; the futility of establishing monuments to the dead; and the impossibility of knowing, both in life and in death. Once dead we leave memories with those who remain. To erect stones, graves, memorials and monuments is nothing but vanity and folly, for 'Man is a Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave' (Browne, 169). These themes have been part of human thinking for centuries and can be found to constitute a large part of the *Book of Ecclesiastes*. At the heart of *Ecclesiastes* is the notion 'to everything there is a time', that life moves in a cycle, but 'there is no new thing under the sun'. Life may be cyclical, but this is only a structure. With reverberations of *Ecclesiastes* and *Urn Burial*, Swift reveals that it is impossible to attain complete self-knowledge as everyone must live only once and for the first time. It is only possible to be sure of death.

Just as the kaleidoscope viewer twists the cylinder to reveal startling combinations of colour, so Swift's readers piece together the cyclical patterns of

Waterland and *Last Orders*. Tom Crick and the narrators of *Last Orders* move through time in a circular manner as they reconstruct memories of the past from a present perspective. As in time travel cinema, chronological time is manipulated by the narrators as they discover that life is a circular structure of memory. In *Waterland* human nature is like the natural environment of the Fens: 'Strictly speaking [the Fens] are never reclaimed, only being reclaimed' (W 7). Swift's use of an epigraph taken from Dickens' *Great Expectations* further emphasises the importance of Natural History and the impending circularity this involves, for our capacity for personal discovery is closely linked with our surrounding natural environment. Swift's perspective is certainly not a new one. The Preacher in *The Book of Ecclesiastes* expounds upon the circularity of the natural world and the ultimate circle of life and death. *Last Orders* adopts a similar view, also exploring the circularity of life and death, inherently conveying a message about how to live, how to die, and how to make connections between the two. With influences of T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land* in its title, the characters of *Last Orders* realise that they must indeed 'Hurry Up', and as they examine their 'longings and desires' they also experience the rain of renewal and embark on new beginnings. Swift's epigraph to this novel, taken from Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial*, further urges the reader to explore the celebration of life rather than the glorification of death. Like the *Book of Ecclesiastes*, *Waterland* and *Last Orders* see through the myth of progress and the fictitious hypothesis of historical science. The narrators of these novels learn to recognise and accept the circularity and cyclical character of the human and natural condition.

CHAPTER THREE

SWIFT'S USE OF
THE FAIRY-TALE IN
WATERLAND
EVER AFTER
AND
OUT OF THIS WORLD

This world which seems to us a thing of stone and flower and blood is not a thing at all but is a tale. And all in it is a tale and each tale the sum of all lesser tales and yet these also are the selfsame tale and contain as well all else within them.

So everything is necessary. ... Nothing can be dispensed with. Nothing despised. Because the seams are hid from us, you see. The joinery. The way in which the world is made. We have no way to know what could be taken away. What omitted. We have no way to know what might stand and what might fall. And those seams which are hid from us are of course in the tale itself and the tale has no abode or place of being except in the telling only and there it lives and makes its home and therefore we can never be done with the telling. Of the telling there is no end. (McCarthy 143)

Fairy godmothers, beautiful princesses, handsome princes, dazzling transformations, incredible coincidences, fulfilled wishes and most importantly, happy endings, are all signature aspects of the traditional story, the fairy tale. Graham Swift is intrigued with the genre of the fairy tale and consistently uses its imagery and other elements in almost all his novels. He is also concerned with the manifestation of the fairy tale in the lives and psychology of his twentieth century characters. Bill Unwin, the narrator of *Ever After*, is steeped in the romanticism and theatricality of fairy tales, constantly retelling his own life in the language and manner of a Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen narrative. Swift employs this approach to reveal the delusions and illusions suffered by the protagonist. As we already know, *Waterland*'s Tom Crick also alludes to fairy tales, often re-telling history in a similar vein. Swift invites us to examine this

relationship more closely and suggests that history is merely another fairy tale to be told in times of distress as a distraction from the present world. As the title of Swift's fourth novel suggests, *Out of This World* also presents a number of fairy tale images, and yet this novel is about the absence of fantasy and imagination in the modern world. The twentieth century is a time for camera and film documentation; about fact, not fantasy. Harry Beech says: 'Without the camera the world might start to disbelieve'(OTW 107), but as the novel progresses we see that the camera and the media are no more than modern contrivances of the traditional fairy tale. Swift interweaves fairy tale motifs throughout *Ever After*, *Waterland* and *Out of This World* in order to portray the ever-present fantasy of our everyday lives and our need to confront illusions if we are to exist in the present. In all three novels Swift suggests that illusion is very much part of our reality, and therefore reality and 'truth' can never be fully discovered.

Tom Crick's world is one steeped in fairy tale and illusion. As seen in chapter two, the Fenlands have played a major part in forming Tom's view of the past and present, and as Tom mentions early in the novel, the ability to tell stories is an important survival tool in the monotonous Fens. *Waterland* supports the theory that from early times fairy tales have been highly functional and can be categorised into areas of human experience: the psychology of the individual, the sociology of the community and even the cosmology of the universe. In other words, fairy tales can be seen as telling us about our own feelings and psyches, as instructing us how to conform to society's expectations, and as offering spiritual guidance about how to see our place in the cosmos. Henry Crick tells his son, 'whatever you learn about people ... each one of

them has a heart, and each one of them was once a tiny baby sucking his mother's milk' (W 1). Of these sentiments Tom writes: 'Fairy-tale words; fairy-tale advice. But we lived in a fairy-tale place' (W 1), realising that these are attitudes which have helped form his view of the world, the events of his life and perhaps even his future. Crick has returned to this fairy tale mode of thinking and proceeds to tell the reader the story of his life, his family and the land.

Outside his novels, Swift is adamant about the power and importance of the fantasy found in stories and its importance in everyday life. In a radio interview with Kim Hill he states very clearly his perception of the imagination: 'The imagination is there to get you out of yourself, to get you beyond yourself, into worlds, into experiences not your own' (Graham Swift with Kim Hill – 22 October 1997). This is of the utmost importance for those who inhabit the Fens of *Waterland*:

How did the Cricks outwit reality? By telling stories. Down to the last generation, they were not only phlegmatic but superstitious and credulous creatures. Suckers for stories. While the Atkinsons made history, the Cricks spun yarns. (W 13)

Like the Crick ancestors, Helen Atkinson (later Crick) has also learnt that survival relies upon the telling of stories. She tells Henry of her incestuous relationship with her father in the form of a story. Tom imagines the story in fairy-tale idiom and begins: 'Once upon a time there was a father who fell in love with his daughter...' (W 204). In turn,

Henry Crick also learns the power of the story on his return from war and relates his painful time in the form of the somewhat imaginative 'Salty Tales of the Trenches'. Tom is also aware of the cathartic strengths of the story – as evident in the narration of his own life as a series of 'Once upon a times'. However, for Dick and Mary the formulation of stories and indulgence of the imagination is impossible, and therefore leads to tragedy. Dick does not possess the power of imagination and as Tom states, '[Dick] forgets tomorrow what he's told today' (W 207), 'No Before, no After ... for him present eclipses past' (W 101). Dick cannot turn the knowledge of his conception into a fairy tale, and is therefore left with just one option: death. Mary's predicament is a little more complicated, for it was her curiosity and imagination which served as a catalyst for the tragic consequences which involve herself, Tom and Dick. The narrator describes his wife as a woman 'who did not believe any more in miracles and fairy-tales' (W 96). Mary has no illusions: 'It's real, this coming of things to their limits, this invasion by Nothing of the fragile islands of life'(W 257). But as the years progress, Mary's kidnapping of the child from the Safeway supermarket reveals that she 'is no longer sure what's real and what isn't'(W 31). Tom realises that his wife lacks the ability to see life as a story-telling process, and says:

First there is nothing; then there is happening ... And after the happening, only the telling of it. But sometimes the happening won't go away and let itself be turned into memory. So she's still in the midst of events (W 247).

Ironically, Mary's lack of imagination has led her to a world where everything is fantasy. Swift implicitly argues that the psychological world, the communal world of society and the order of the greater cosmos have all been dislocated through Mary's inability to formulate her past into story-form.

Tom returns to the mode of the fairy tale for a number of reasons: to make sense of his life and the chaos of the present; to provide comfort in his time of dislocation; to return to the words, and perhaps the associated security, of his childhood. Crick tells us that story-telling is an inherent part of human nature and implies that story-telling is essential to sanity:

Children, only animals live entirely in the Here and Now ... But man - let me offer you a definition - is the story-telling animal. Wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker buoys and trail-signs of stories. He has to keep making them up. As long as there's a story, it's all right. (*W* 47)

According to Tom, stories are a comfort at all times of life, from childhood to adulthood, through to old age. However, the common denominator of fear is always present, and therefore, according to Tom, where there is fear, there are stories, and where there are stories, there is fear: 'explaining, evading the facts, making up meanings, taking a larger view, putting things into perspective, dodging the here and now, education, history, fairy-tales - it helps to eliminate the fear'. (*W* 182)

Crick is constantly partaking in the above, and like the child who once found comfort in his mother's bedtime tales, he attempts to reduce his own life to a series of chapters. When the most fearful subjects must be talked of, Tom reverts to the mode of the traditional fairy tale. Mary's mental instability has been the initial motivation for Tom's narration. The circumstances of the present are more fearful for Tom than those of the past, even Martha Clay's performance of Mary's abortion and Dick's suicide. The most reiterated sentence in *Waterland* is one that involves Tom, Mary and the fairy tale: 'Once upon a time there was a history teacher's wife called Mary ...' (W 88), or alternatively, 'Once upon a time there was a future history teacher's wife ...' (W 92). Tom uses the words of fairy tales to evade the facts, the memories and present happenings of his reality.

Maria Tartar argues that the central hero of the fairy-tale moves through a magical realm from an oppressed condition in the drab world of everyday reality, to a shining new reality. Tartar describes this hero as a 'traveler between two worlds' (Tartar 61). As the central 'hero' of his narrative, Tom Crick is a traveler between many worlds, including the world of reality and the world of fantasy; the world of the past and the world of the present. As the Opies argue, fairy-tales are always set in an indeterminate time where past, present and future merge. It is also well-known that the events of these tales verge on the very border of the possible and impossible. Crick discovers such moments in his own life, and says: 'Children, have you ever stepped into another world? Have you ever turned a corner to where Now and Long Ago are the same and

time seems to be going on in some other place?' (W 228). The tragic and traumatic events of their adolescence have meant that for Tom and Mary, life frequently consists of these merging worlds: 'We've already stepped into a different world. The one where things come to a stop; the one where the past will go on happening ...' (W 229). In the traditional fairy tale, the protagonist eventually reaches the end of his trials in the world of fantasy and magic, choosing the reality of wealth, marriage and happiness. Despite the abundance of fairy-tale characters, over-tones and motifs in *Waterland*, the ending is not one of happiness and 'shining reality', but one of tragic self-realisation.

Waterland can be read as an inverted modern fairy tale. Elements of the novel compete for our attention with fairy tale elements, but inevitably conclude with the dire and tragic results unbecoming the traditional fairy tale. Charles Dickens also used the fairy tale to similar effect in his novel *Great Expectations*. As we have seen, Swift was clearly influenced by Dickens, and takes *Waterland's* epigraph from Dickens' *Great Expectations*: 'Ours was the marsh country ...' *Waterland* is a myriad of significant and deflected meanings. In order to understand the influence of the fairy tale and its wider implications in the work of Swift, it is important to first examine Dickens's views on fantasy and imagination, and his employment of these techniques in *Great Expectations*.

Like Tom Crick, Charles Dickens held a strong belief that fairy tales were crucial in forming the imagination of a child and strongly associated with the quality of adult life (Stone 34). He was a believer in the imaginative powers of the fairy tale, claiming that

the literature of his own childhood, which included vast numbers of fairy stories, 'kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time' (Stone 3). He subsequently incorporated these 'fancies' in his own fictional work and *Great Expectations* is no exception. Many of the traditional fairy tale elements are interwoven in the story of Pip's hopes, dreams and expectations. The misty, watery marshlands of Pip's childhood and the castle-like Satis House provide a suitable setting in which the novel's ogres, princesses and fairy godmothers move. The plot of *Great Expectations* fulfils many of the traditional fairy tale criteria and yet it would appear that Dickens struggled to resist the memories and influences of the fairy tale. This is most clearly revealed in the opposing conclusions to the novel.

According to Eiichi Hara, *Great Expectations* has its origins in and follows, or seems to follow, the pivotal plot of a fairy tale. The fairy godmother provides the fortune and a beautiful princess, while Pip, the hero, will save the distressed damsel from the prison-like castle. However, Dickens subverts and even manipulates the fairy tale appearance of the novel's plot. Pip's story revolves around his interpretation of circumstance, rather than of evidence. Accordingly, the surface-plot shifts; Pip first believes Miss Havisham to be controlling the story of his life and must alter his fairy tale when Magwitch reveals himself as fairy godfather. Thus, the reader is aware of what is happening at the forefront of the story but is uneasy about the undercurrent. This is partly due to the nature of the book's narration. Pip's story is told in the first person, from an adult's perspective, and subsequently there is a certain distance between the narrator and the

child Pip. Ultimately this means that the fairy tale element of the novel must be countered if the author is to convey his message regarding Pip and his delusions.

Although *Waterland* is narrated in the first person, for the most part Tom refers to himself in the third person as, for example, 'Your future history teacher', 'Your history teacher', 'the son' and 'the husband'. However, as in *Great Expectations*, a similar distance is created between reader and narrator in that, like Pip, Tom is struggling with his delusions and illusions of the past. We know that he clings to the fairy tales and happenings of his youth in order to hold on to the reality of the present, not to mention his sanity. Pip's present reality is one of safety; he can look back from a comfortable present, creating a tale laced with fantasy and illusion, but told from a wiser perspective. Tom, however, presents a story of despair, heightened by his imagination and an inherent ability to tell stories. This is a tale told by a man who is still in the middle of his story, unable to narrate with knowledge of a conclusion. This is indeed the tale of the Here and Now.

Waterland also has many fairy tale characteristics. Like *Great Expectations*, Swift's novel abounds in characters and events of fairy tale-like dimensions: the horrid father who locks his beautiful daughter in a tower to keep her from the admiring male gaze (Ernest Atkinson and his daughter Helen); the hero who lives in a poor cottage and marries the rich land owner's daughter (Tom Crick and Mary Metcalf); the wise man who has seemingly lived forever (Bill Clay); and as the narrator clearly states, 'since these fairy-tales aren't all sweet and cosy (just dip into your Brothers Grimm), since no

fairy-tale is complete without one, let me tell you ... ABOUT THE WITCH' (W 224). Martha Clay is a creation straight from the pages of a fairy-tale, reminiscent of Miss Havisham, though with the speech mannerisms of Magwitch:

'Well now, well now ... What brings you to owd Martha? Martha don' git many callers this time o' day ... O save it up, bor! I got eyes in me head, hevn't I? You're a-goin' to say that little missy here's got somethin' she wants to git rid o''.
(W 227)

Like the infamous Miss Havisham, Martha lives on the outskirts of society, not in a castle, but in an old cottage. She too is associated with timelessness and eternity. Her very name, 'Clay' associates her with the timelessness of the Fens and the continuous process of land reclamation. The narrator talks of Martha and her husband Bill being around in his great-great grandfather's time. The narrator's perceptions of Martha Clay have naturally been coloured by the talk and rumour of generations of Fenlanders, and in archetypal fashion, Tom believes Martha to have the ability to concoct potions and pronounce predictions. But most importantly for Tom and Mary, Martha has the power to 'get rid of love-children ...' (W 225). On meeting Martha, Tom admits that there is 'No pointed hat, no broomstick, no grinning black cat on shoulder' (W 226), and yet he cannot shake his initial belief that Martha has the powers of magic and evil. In many ways Tom is like Pip. He is taken in by his own imagination and illusions. Pip believes Miss Havisham to be his benefactor and fairy godmother; Tom believes Martha to be a witch, capable of performing an abortion and perhaps even of casting an evil spell which

gives rise to Mary's barrenness and her subsequent kidnapping of a baby in mid-life. No matter how Tom attempts to talk himself out of these imaginings, as the abortion draws to a conclusion, he panics and returns to his fairy-tale world: 'Martha's poisoned Mary, she's killed her. Now she's coming over to me - to deal with little Hansel, who happens to be stationed conveniently near the oven' (W 230). Like Pip, Tom avoids reality and when he faces times of trouble, he reverts to the world of the fairy-tale, reducing the people and circumstances that surround him to the realm of magic and fantasy.

A darker and more sinister side to the fairy tale can be found in the Gothic novel. In Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, the winding passages and staircases of Prince Manfred's castle herald nothing but menace and vengeance. In *Great Expectations* Dickens employs subtle allusions to the Gothic genre, particularly in his representation of Satis House which can be seen as a kind of Gothic castle. On his first visit to Miss Havisham, Estella leads Pip up a winding staircase and through dark passages, typical of the Gothic castle. Pip later captures this atmosphere when he says, 'The wind seemed to blow colder there than outside the gates; and it made a shrill noise in howling in and out...' (GE, 64). The old Atkinson brewery serves as a kind of Castle of Otranto or Satis House in *Waterland*. It is here that Ernest Atkinson sleeps with his daughter; where Dick, the 'Potato-head' is conceived. The brewery also houses returned soldiers of war struggling with their own peculiar horrors and nightmares. The surrounding Fen landscape serves as a further reminder of the dark, damp and unknown territory typical of the Gothic novel. In fact, *The New York Times* heralded the

first American publication of *Waterland* as a 'Gothic family saga' (back jacket, Washington Square Press, second edition, 1983). Once again we see Swift follow Dickens' use of the Gothic genre, arguably with more mystery and murderous horror. The Gothic novel is more often than not destined for despair, as hopes and dreams are thwarted by uncontrollable powers. Prince Manfred is at the whim of powers beyond his control, as is Tom Crick. Swift's narrator is a man beholden to his memories and stories of the past. His hopes and dreams of love, security and stability disintegrate as the power of the Here and Now becomes the power of the past, only to be catapulted back to the Here and Now. Tom realises that 'young knights ... need their damsels - especially the beleaguered, inaccessible ones in forbidden towers' (*W* 162), but despairs of ever reaching his wife as she lies imprisoned in the asylum of her mind.

Within the novels *Great Expectations* and *Waterland* there are a number of worlds, including the world of the fairy tale and the world of reality. For three-quarters of *Great Expectations*, Pip is in the world of the fairy tale. It is essential that he discard this mode of living and exit this world if he is to reach maturity and full character development. It is important to note that Pip does in fact have solid expectations, that he does have a 'liberal benefactor', but in his world, expectations are magically fulfilled and liberal benefactors are fairy godmothers. The fairy tale also provides a link between the past and the present. Zipes argues that myth (and, by implication, fairy tale), tells us, through the experiences of supernatural beings, how reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, or only a fragment of reality. The connection between the myth or story and the present enables us to gain a sense of our universal

origins, feel the process of history in the present, and time as eternal and all-embracing (Zipes). For Tom Crick, the family stories of his ancestors and the formation of the Fens constitute myth and allow the past to be part of the present. Crick argues that: 'Life includes a lot of empty space ... Life is one-tenth Here and Now, nine-tenths a history lesson ... What do you do when reality is an empty space? You can tell stories.' (W 46). Through these stories Tom attempts to find an explanation for his present reality. If nothing else, he comes to understand that each story is always part of another. Like McCarthy, Swift supports the theory presented in this chapter's epigraph: 'All in [the world] is a tale and each tale the sum of all lesser tales' (McCarthy 143). Therefore, despite similarities, Swift and Dickens utilise the fairy tale for different purposes. Undoubtedly both Pip and Tom employ the fairy tale to escape reality, yet there is a subtle difference: Pip engages the fairy tale to create reality, while Tom utilises fairy tale motifs in order to cope with reality.

Waterland is also an inversion of the fairy tale, and certainly follows the typical conclusions of the Gothic genre. No matter how many stories are told and no matter how many evocations of fairy tales and folklore are uttered, Mary remains barren and in a mental asylum; Tom remains on the edge of sanity; and Dick is 'on his way. Obeying instinct. Returning. The Ouse flows to the sea ...' (W 269). Pip indulges the fairy tale to suit his magnificent fantasies, believing his creations to be proof of his expectations, while the reader is perfectly aware of his delusion. The reader withholds judgement on Tom Crick because he is apparently honest about his constructs and manipulations: 'We don't know the half, so a good half must be make-believe' (W 105). Through the

horror of his adolescence and the terror of the present we know that Tom tells stories to survive: 'No, don't forget. Don't erase it. But make it into a story. Just a story. Yes, everything's crazy. What's real? All a story. Only a story' (W 170).

Swift continues his references to the fairy tale and also to *Great Expectations* in his later novel *Ever After*. In a number of ways the protagonist of *Ever After* more closely resembles Pip than *Waterland*'s Tom Crick. In *Ever After* the fairy tale motif is used to reveal Bill's delusions and illusions, and his attempt to gain control of these in his personal realm of chaos. This is evident from the very opening sentence of the novel, which derives from the traditional fairy tale. Iona and Peter Opie argue that a distinct characteristic of the fairy tale is its opening sentence, the familiar words of 'Once upon a time ...' followed by a reference to an unidentified age: 'Once upon a time there was a king and a queen, as in many lands have been ...', 'Once upon a time, and be sure, 'twas a long time ago...', 'Once upon a time, and twice upon a time, and all times together as ever I heard of...', 'Once upon a time and a very good time it was, though it was neither in your time nor my time, nor nobody else's time..' (Opie 15). The Opies also argue the fairy tale, as told today, is essentially unbelievable. Although fairy tales rarely contain flitting little fantasy creatures of the air, they do exhibit elements of enchantment, the supernatural or the magical that are clearly in the realm of the imaginary. The narrator of *Ever After* begins: 'These are, I should warn you, the words of a dead man' (EA 1). Although the words 'Once upon a time...' do not feature in this sentence, Swift's 'words of a dead man', lead the reader to believe that the narration to follow will be fairy-tale like and will consequently involve events from the past, a time

when he interacted with the happenings of the real world. The issued warning suggests that there is something out of the ordinary or something of the magical or spiritual about to be related, for after all, we all know dead men cannot speak. Like the opening of a fairy tale, the time and land is unidentifiable. The sentence is dramatic and the reader sits back to indulge in a tale of unreality that will inevitably conclude in the suggested words of the title, happily 'ever after'.

Swift, however, is quick to change this preconception in the first major paragraph of the novel. Our illusions of the opening sentence are shattered by the revelation that our 'dead man' is very much alive, as a 'privileged' member of the academic world. The narrator does, however, inform the reader that 'I should warn you' of the opening sentence 'stands' whether he is dead or alive. Furthermore, we are told that the narrative will not be in the magical mode of a fairy tale, but merely the 'ramblings of a prematurely aged' man (EA 1). The detailed and cynical manner of this first paragraph deals with the secluded life led by those who live within the walls of the college. The narrator is primarily concerned with age, the effects of age and the aging process in general. He talks of himself as 'prematurely aged', of a 'certain age' and 'a little past fifty'. The cynicism continues as he compares 'those sexy young studs' of the college to those over fifty who 'settle rather quickly into the lean and slippered pantaloons'. Academics within the walls of the college, the narrator explains, reach sixty, seventy and eighty years of age, displaying the stereotypical characteristics of old age accepted and revered among the college. Bill Unwin states that 'true donhood, like the quality of fine wine, is inseparable from age' (EA 1). These circumstances and revelations are

juxtaposed to the fairy tale element in the opening line of the novel. Fairy tales are essentially concerned with youth, romance and inevitably the future.

As the novel progresses, the reader sees that despite the radically different worlds of the fairy tale and our own in the twentieth century, we share many of the same fears and aspirations: the search for love; the search for 'gold' at the end of the rainbow, whether that be literal or metaphorical; fear of the 'monster' or 'witch', and most importantly, fear of the unknown. In order to cope with these we create our own spheres of unreality and illusion. *Ever After* presents us with many of these alternative worlds. The university has the allure of a fairy tale castle:

Twilights full of bells and the pad of feet on old stones. Light in study windows. Arches and towers. The whole absurd and cherished edifice rising like some fantastical lantern out of the miasmal Fens and out of the darkness of dark ages. The illusion of the illusion. (EA 90)

This 'illusion of the illusion' is a crucial component of the novel for the narrator explores many aspects of society which encourage belief in unreality. Bill's wife, Ruth, is a movie star. She spends her life pretending to be people she is not. The world of film allows both her and her audience to escape the reality of life; we retreat into a world which impersonates our own: 'the illusion of the illusion'. This is also the case with the world of the ballerinas Bill becomes enchanted with as a boy of nine years wandering the streets of Paris. Opera, too, fulfils this role of reflecting life with and without its fears

and dangers. For the young Bill, the opera is a catalyst that enables him to see that 'Reality and Romance could ... poignantly collude with each other' (EA 13). In the opening of chapter two the narrator talks of Paris existing in three quite separate states: the 'glorious, the marvellous, the lost and luminous city ... that exists in my mind': 'the actual city whose streets I once trod'; and the city 'which is now older by some forty years' (EA 13). As in *Waterland*, the narrator of *Ever After* is confronted by numerous and contrasting worlds: reality and fantasy; past and present.

In *Ever After* Swift portrays the twentieth century as an age full of nostalgia. Each character hankers after something which is lost, some illusion of the past. Like Tom Crick, each character looks to the past for an element of fairy-tale existence in the present. History can be turned into a fairy tale, a story, providing an escape from the present. We look for the illusion of fairy tales in our own age, but if we look closely fairy tales are merely the illusion of another age, as Bill says 'the nostalgia for the nostalgia of nostalgia' (EA 81). However, as the narrator notes, 'We see what we choose to see, we see what we think we see' (EA 13). Sam Ellison pursues what the narrator refers to as 'pedigree-hunting'. Genealogical investigations lead Sam to discover that a former Ellison, John Elyson (1623), had been a senior fellow of the college where the narrator now resides. Sam is an American with an 'indelible Cleveland accent' who, despite making his fortune with the aid of plastic, yearns for the 'real thing'. This means a 'real' Tudor mansion, 'fine tailoring', 'choice antiques' and anything else that will enable him to become a 'Real English Gentleman'. Sam traces the past until he discovers the 'fairy-tale', the magic kiss of history, that transforms him into a charmed English aristocrat - in his own eyes. Great Uncle 'Ratty' Rawlinson also scours the past for the

magic potion that will allow him dignity, despite his unspecified 'inglorious, unglorifiable blunder' in the First World War. The narrator refers to Ratty's genealogical studies as 'looking for borrowed glory', for like Sam, Ratty traces his family tree until he is satisfied with a tale that will provide an illusion for his present life. In this case, Ratty seizes upon the illustrious Raleigh, 'the great Elizabethan worthy himself, he of the pointed beard, muddled cloak and imperishable fame' (EA 29).

However, *Ever After* is a novel which produces no heroes and no beautiful princesses who live together happily ever after. In this regard *Ever After*, like the second ending to Dickens' *Great Expectations*, is an inversion of the traditional fairy tale. There are certainly elements of these fairy tale motifs within the novel but they fail to form a recognizable whole in Bill Unwin's narration. Like *Great Expectations*, *Ever After* is a story about the beginnings of fairy tales that never ended in 'happily ever after'. When hypothesising as to how Matthew Pearce and Elizabeth Hunt met, Unwin makes an unconsciously revealing comment about the narration of his own life and the novel as a whole: 'The way things begin. The auguries of happy-ever-afters' (EA 107). There are many fortuitous beginnings in the novel which the reader blindly hopes will conclude with the fairy tale words 'happily ever after'. However, not one 'augury of happily-ever-afters' ends successfully.

Through the eyes of Bill Unwin, Ruth Vaughan is seen as the princess of his life, himself as the flat-footed, gangling prince. However, despite the romance of their beginning and indeed of their entire relationship, if we are to believe Bill, Ruth and Bill cannot live

the fairy tale 'happily ever after', for Ruth commits suicide in the throes of cancer. The imaginary romantic introduction of the Victorian Matthew and Elizabeth, their comfortable and loving marriage, is destroyed by Matthew's revelation that his faith in God was destroyed after a confrontation with the remains of an ichthyosaur before he even met his wife. Elizabeth remarries, Matthew boards a ship to America and is drowned before he reaches the New World. The letter and diaries left by Matthew reveal the love he had for Elizabeth and the tragedy which resulted from his beliefs. As Bill reads through the material left to him after his mother's death the reader is aware that even if Matthew and Elizabeth were able to reconcile their differences, history and time must take their inevitable course. Youth and love do not, and cannot, live forever. All that can remain are the scrawlings of an eighteenth century man who suffered a tortured conscience. Hardly the makings of a 'happily-ever-after' conclusion. Even the marriage of Bill's own mother and the man he believes to be his father, Colonel Unwin, cannot survive the 'auguries of happily-ever-afters'. The prestigious Colonel in his uniform and the young Miss Rawlinson with the song-bird voice - theirs' was a marriage that might have enhanced Sylvia's singing career, and a career that may have enhanced a marriage: 'the steel-haired diplomat and his diva wife; he sits in his box, proudly and conspicuously clapping, while she on the stage, receives an avalanche of bouquets' (EA 36). This wonderful match also disintegrates. Even the despicable Michael Potter and his wife Katherine participate in the beginnings of a fairy tale. They meet at university; he is a lecturer of 'Victorian idealism and Victorian Doubt'; she is a student interested in Arthurianism in Tennyson. Bill comments that Katherine 'evoked

the graciously draped women of past ages' (EA 81) for Michael. They fell in love, married and did not live happily ever after.

Clearly the title of this novel is straight from the pages of a fairy tale, but the phrase 'ever after' is usually preceded by the word 'happily'. The essential ingredients of the traditional fairy tale include romance, youth and happiness. *Ever After* is no tale of ever-lasting romance, and as Bill clearly states: 'Our wooing doth not end an old play. Jack hath not Jill' (EA 120). Happiness has been abandoned for grief, loneliness and depression. Youth has been replaced by middle age and death. Therefore, what lives 'ever after' in the life and times of Bill Unwin? In typical Swiftian style, there are a number of possibilities. Firstly, Matthew's diaries have survived over one hundred and fifty years and are resurrected and studied by Bill. As discussed in chapter three, Bill questions Matthew's motives for writing and his plea for his work's survival: 'Is it possible that in the midst of his torment of soul ... one tiny corner of Matthew's eye was aimed at posterity? ... A small plea for non-extinction. A life after all, beyond life' (EA 207). An ichthyosaurus fossil embedded in the cliffs of Lyme Regis is also a phenomenon of 'Life beyond life' and has been the very catalyst for Matthew's writings. The representation of Ruth lives on in her films: 'You can turn a page, push a button, press a cassette into its slot, and there will be Ruth - moving, talking, breathing ... They are, and they are not Ruth' (EA 256). As the narrator states at the very beginning of the novel, he has survived death, and has just cause to ask: 'what should I expect now: that I should live for ever?' (EA 255). *Ever After* is about memories which live on when a person dies; about nostalgia for happiness, and happiness which can never be. 'Ever

after' can only truly be found in fantasy, for it is this world which allows for a 'life beyond life'.

Like Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, *Ever After* can be read as an inversion of the classical fairy tale. Rather than hinting at or ending in eternal happiness, it is a novel which emanates the uncertainty of the twentieth century. In the opening pages of the novel the narrator talks of the university as if it were a completely separate entity, set aside from society. Within that realm the narrator and others who live in the college are given to believe that 'the world is falling apart; its social fabric is in tatters, its ecosystem is near collapse. Real: that is, flimsy, perishing, stricken, doomed' (EA 2). Throughout the novel the reader is confronted with a world that is uncertain, unreliable, uncontrollable and constantly changing. Unwin realises that from the time of Darwin's *Evolution of Species* and the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution the Western world has become more complex and yet in many other ways a good deal more simple. Victorian Matthew Pearce can no longer accept simple explanations of life. He questions the role of God in the forming of the universe, believing Darwin to be nearer the 'truth' than his pious and religious father-in-law. Through the Pearce diaries Swift is able to question how much it is possible for anyone to know. Matthew cannot know if there is a God or meaning to life, just as Bill cannot know the meaning to his own life or Matthew's life over one hundred years later. Likewise, the reader must accept the narration Bill and Matthew present, but understand that omniscience is unattainable. Reality and fantasy are intertwined and truth is elusive.

Like Pip, Bill indulges in illusions of fantasy concerning the circumstances of his life. In many ways he has lived a fairy tale existence, believing what he wishes to about his mother, step-father and wife Ruth, never confronting these conceptions and always adhering to his personal motives. As in *Great Expectations*, the narrator of *Ever After* tells his story from the adult perspective, intermittently looking back on his childhood and adolescence. As with the narrator Pip and the child Pip, a certain distance exists between Bill the story teller and Bill the spoilt, wilful child. Furthermore, each memory is coated in the frosty blurring of nostalgia, selective recollection and elements of reconstruction. Placed precariously among these memories are references to classical fairy tale traits and the genre in general. The narrator must confront these fairy tale illusions but can do so only after they have been shattered by the power of knowledge and Bill's realisation of the illusory state of his life. Swift, like Dickens, uses the fairy tale motif in *Ever After* in order to portray the fantasy of the fairy tale in our own lives and the need to overcome these illusions if we are to exist in the present. However, he also explores the notion that illusion is very much a part of our reality.

Like Pip, Bill interprets the circumstances of his life rather than consulting the evidence and facts that surround these circumstances. He says early in the novel: 'We see what we choose to see, we see what we think we see' (EA 13). Throughout his narration Bill consistently views his memories, and even events of the immediate present, with the glow of a hopelessly romantic story teller. The facts of his story are surrounded by the overtones of a by-gone age and allusions to other stories. When describing his own birth he borrows the glamour and romance of the nation's king and would-be queen:

I was born in December 1936, in the very week that a King of England gave up his crown in order to marry the woman he loved. Naturally, I knew nothing about this at the time ... But I have always felt that the timing of my arrival imbued my life, for better or worse, with a sort of fairy-tale propensity (*EA* 57).

Whether this 'fairy-tale propensity' developed due to the place and time of birth or merely because of the narrator's egotistical romantic notions, it is clear that he utilises this 'talent' in all facets of his life, especially when relating the memories of his childhood. To Bill, Paris is more than just a city he visited as a child. Over forty years later he claims he saw Paris as a nine year old child and found it to be a 'fairy-tale city ... with enchanted streets and eternal air of licensed felicity' (*EA* 57). But he does try to be honest with himself and the reader, saying:

When I try to remember the glorious, the marvellous, the lost and luminous city of Paris, I find it hard to separate the city that exists in the mind ... from the actual city whose streets I once trod (*EA* 13).

This is also the case with other events in Bill's life as he has great difficulty in discerning the difference between the reality of an event or relationship and the fantasy that has developed within his mind. This becomes evident in the narration of his romance with

his wife, Ruth Vaughan. Like Estella in *Great Expectations*, Ruth never becomes a full-bodied character in the novel; the reader learns almost nothing of this woman beyond the idealised and romantic account presented by her husband. Bill constantly talks of their relationship in comparison with other, more famous loves, reducing Ruth and himself to archetypes of great romance: 'Dido and Aeneas. Ginger and Fred' (EA 77), 'Jack and Jill' (EA 78), 'Mimi' and 'Roldolfo' (EA 250), 'The student and the chorus girl. The scholar and the actress' (EA 118). Their acquaintance began 'in the days before she was famous', and Bill asks himself 'which was the greater fairy-tale?' (EA 77), meaning Ruth's life upon the stage or her life with him. It soon becomes clear which he would rather believe. For Bill, Ruth is the epitome of 'Romantic Love': 'The first flustered kiss on a wet night in a taxi with Girl Number Three. The last kiss, at break of dawn, to the Queen of Egypt. 'Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies a lass unparallel'd' (EA 121). Ruth remains an elusive and distant image who reveals nothing more than a poster advertising one of her movies.

As Tom Crick notes, fairy tales are often told to an upset child in order to distract them from the situation at hand. These tales of fantasy provide an escape from reality, the past and the present. Bill uses the fairy tale motif of his narration in a similar child-like manner. Throughout the novel Bill's memories of childhood, particular experiences and even relationships are surrounded by misty fog through which it is difficult to see, but from which emerge princesses, evil step-parents and loyal knights of passion. Bill looks for the illusion of the fairy tale in his own life, yet fairy tales are also the illusion of another age. This is a phenomenon that Bill is sub-consciously aware of, inadvertently

referring to it as: 'the nostalgia for the nostalgia of nostalgia' (EA 81). Literally, nostalgia is the sentimental yearning for a period of the past. Throughout *Ever After*, Bill reflects on his childhood and the relationships of his life, shrouding them with imagery stolen from the fairy tale genre. Fairy tales are also concerned with the past, typically beginning with the nostalgic words, 'Once upon a time, a long time ago...'. Thus, 'the nostalgia for the nostalgia of nostalgia' is concerned with three periods of time: the present, the past and a time before then. This becomes important as the reader begins to question the reliability of the narrator. Like Pip, Bill interprets circumstances from an emotive stance rather than an investigative one. Consequently, the reader cannot be sure if the narrative reflects what Bill actually sees and experiences or what he would like to see and experience. However, unlike Pip, Bill is aware of the many possible interpretations of life, and revealingly he states: 'We see what we choose to see, we choose to see what we think we see' (EA 13).

This proves to be so in the matter of his father's death and identity. In post-war Paris Colonel Unwin puts a gun to his head and kills himself. Bill 'chooses to see' his mother's affair with the young American Sam as the catalyst for his father's death, and for the next forty odd years 'chooses' to blame Sam for the deprivation of his father. However, after Sylvia's death Sam reveals to Bill that the Colonel was not in fact his biological father, and that Sylvia revealed this to the Colonel the night before he killed himself. This leaves Bill to speculate on the identity of his real father and the reason for his thought-to-be father's suicide. The reluctant message bearer, Sam, says to the stunned narrator: 'You have to tell the truth, don't you, pal?' (EA 195). However, the

'truth' proves to be elusive, and Bill is left with many versions of what could have happened: that his mother did or did not know he was another man's son; that she would have told him, if she had been able, in the last days of her life; that the colonel killed himself because of his 'conscientious aversion', an explanation suggested by the army; that Sylvia told the Colonel he was not Bill's father, 'knowing the man was primed, in any case, to commit suicide' (EA 195); that she never told him he was not the boy's father and invented the story of telling him because it was 'a) a way of confessing a long-suppressed and burdensome truth, and b) it effectively masked ... the real cause of his suicide' (EA 196). The list of possible realities is long and complicated. For Bill there is no one 'true' reality, but rather a selection from which he must choose, for he can only 'see what he chooses to see' and 'choose to see what he thinks he sees'.

Much of Bill's narration is concerned with his present self, and his past self. Bill sees himself as two separate beings: Bill before Ruth's death and his own suicide attempt, and Bill, after Ruth's death and post-suicide recovery: 'I feel as though I have *moved on*, in some critical but indefinable way, from what I was before. I have left my former self, whatever that was, behind. I am changed' (EA 3). Before Ruth's death, Bill was innocent of the enormous possibilities surrounding his father's suicide and identity; he was innocent of sadness as he basked in his love for Ruth; with the exception of his father's suicide, Bill Unwin was also innocent of death. However, following Ruth's illness and subsequent suicide, all this changes. Bill discovers sadness and despair, he gains knowledge about the numerous possibilities of 'truth', and he witnesses the death of his mother, his stepfather, and finally, attempts to end his own life. Bill is open about

this and tells us about death: 'I looked the beast itself hard in the face. Not just looked it in the face but wanted it to devour me ... I am talking of ... attempted self-slaughter' (EA 3). The attempted suicide is the border between innocence and knowledge. As Sophie of *Out of This World* states: 'We can never unknow what we already know' (OTW 57). Therefore, innocence can never be recovered. Bill's constant reference to fairy tales and his inclination to relate his life as part of a fairy tale indicate that he desperately wishes to return to a time when the innocence of fairy stories echoed the innocence of life. However, we cannot return to the fairy tale. The struggle between knowledge and innocence is echoed in the story of the Victorian Matthew Pearce. In 1844, aged twenty-five, Matthew 'comes face to face' with a fossilised ichthyosaurus on the cliffs of Dover. Bill hypothesises as to how Matthew reacted:

He stood face to face with the skull of a beast that must have lived ... unimaginably longer ago than even the most generous computations from Scripture allowed for the beginning of the world ... only now, in the pathetically locatable nineteenth century, had it come to be known that it existed at all. (EA 101)

In his diaries, Matthew describes this event as 'The moment of my unbelief. The beginning of my disbelief'(EA 101), thus resonating twentieth century Bill's irretrievable loss of innocence. Matthew's brush with an ichthyosaurus has meant that he cannot return to his former belief in God and religion, just as Bill cannot return to a world where life is a fairy tale. Like Bill, knowledge of other realities has meant a loss of innocence

for Matthew. However, Matthew's diaries carry another message: 'happiness is not to be purchased by a refusal of knowledge' (EA 52), and so Matthew must leave his family and set sail for a new world, America, and Bill must take his new knowledge, leave the fairy tales and reconcile his past with the present. Bill is aware of this advice from the outset of his narration, stating: 'Part of me ... feels the forlorn urge to find and meet my former self again, secretly wondering, as it does so, whether the meeting will be happy or disastrous' (EA 4). No matter how many fairy stories are narrated, Bill, like his ancestor Matthew Pearce, has crossed the border of innocence to knowledge and can never return.

The past and the present, the real and the imaginary merge for the narrator and reader of *Ever After*. The indistinguishable nature of reality and fantasy implies that the imaginary also constitutes a form of truth. Bill continues to make fairy tales of his memories, and yet, like Pip, he indicates that beneath the misty coating of his tales there lies a sense of what is life and what is imagination. Bill is without Tom Crick's maturity and cannot see that he resorts to the mode of the fairy tale in order to escape his present world of reality. However, he frequently acknowledges that he exists in two separate worlds: the world of the 'Real: that is, flimsy, perishing, stricken, doomed' (EA 2); and the reality he juxtaposes with the 'outside' world: the ancient walls of the university where he delves into reconstructed memory and outright fantasy. As Bill's narration progresses, these two realms become confused, and he admits: 'I paid the world the solemn respect of supposing it might not be real' (EA 70). As fact becomes jumbled with fiction Bill concludes that Ruth's death and his own attempt at suicide is

'not the end of the world' and 'Life goes on' (EA 120). This is a crucial step for Bill and an indication to the reader that the narrator also represents life as he sees fit and not all can be accurate. It becomes clear that for Bill the stage mirrors life, fiction echoes reality, and truth reflects imagination and fantasy. Reality and fantasy blend, merge and combine until the narrator can blithely say: 'What difference does it make? The true or the false. This one or that one. The world will not shatter because of a single misconception' (EA 204). Thus, Bill continues to recall his memories with a nostalgia more suited to the genre of fairy tale.

Out of This World is another of Swift's novels steeped in the mode of story-telling. Fairy tale motifs are utilised throughout Harry and Sophie's narratives, but ultimately *Out of This World* presents a realm of modern 'reality', where the media has replaced the fantasy of imagination. However, the visual mode of representation is also a form of narrative and encompasses a view that 'reality' is produced and sustained by cultural portrayals and stories. In an interview with Kim Hill Swift discusses the role of story-telling in a world latent with the media and modernity:

I think the urge to tell stories and indeed to listen to stories is plainly very deep within human nature. It's something that's been with us clearly for a long time. I think however sort of sophisticated and modern you get about story telling, basically it's a very primitive and rather mysterious thing. And also, rather a magical thing. I think to a certain extent, all writers are trying to be magicians ...

it's not for nothing that we talk about a story casting a spell. (Swift with Kim Hill - 22 October 1997)

The title of Swift's fourth book suggests something from the realm of fairy-tale; something not of this world; something outside our every day experience of reality. Yet, *Out of This World* is a novel concerned with the portrayal of 'reality' in a very fact-conscious twentieth century. It focuses on matters of memory, truth and representation, especially as they relate to modern history and society. But in the twentieth century, fantasy and imagination have left the world, and only a domain of facts remains. These 'facts' have become photographic representations: still photos, cinema and television. The camera has taken the place of the story-teller.

The function of the camera is to capture and mirror an image of reality. It reflects the world within its lens view. Photographs are thought to be a true and accurate reflection of an event, and therefore offer little room for conjecture and speculation about the occurrence of a recorded event. In this manner the camera keeps the world from fantasy and fairy-tales. Harry supports this in saying: 'Without the camera the world might start to disbelieve', for 'Seeing is believing and certain things must be seen to have been done' (*OTW* 107). According to Harry, the camera's shutter is always open 'when the world wants to close its eyes' (*OTW* 92). The modern world has become a place preoccupied with recording reality. Harry says that times have changed, and now it is 'The camera first, then the event. The whole world is waiting to get turned into film' (*OTW* 13). In a world intent on portraying reality, and excluding fantasy, the camera

comes to replace tales of fancy, and manufactures stories of its own, for the world, no matter how modern, cannot survive without fiction. As Harry notes, an imperceptible inversion has occurred: 'As if the world were the lost property of the camera. To translate itself, as if afraid it might otherwise vanish, into the new myth of its own authentic-synthetic photographic memory' (OTW 189). Above all, 'people want stories. They don't want facts. Even journalists say "story" when they mean "event". Of the news photo they say: Every picture tells a story' (OTW 92). Despite the lack of overt traditional story-telling techniques in *Out of This World*, the camera, and by association, the greater media, formulate and portray a world brimming with existences and experiences bordering on reality and fantasy.

Harry asks: 'A photo is a piece of reality? A fragment of truth?' (OTW 120), and in the modern world the answer to this question is a resounding, 'yes'. The world has 'become this vast display of evidence, this exhibition of recorded data, this continuously running movie' (OTW 55), so much so that an event must be recorded in order to have happened. Harry relates a number of photo-journalist escapades which support this argument, but also indicate that many other realities also exist. An American soldier taking photos of the mounds of corpses in a concentration camp protects himself with his camera; it is something between himself and reality. Harry wonders if, without the camera, the GI would have come so close to the piles of dead bodies. The man takes the pictures so as to 'have future proof of what his own eyes were seeing' (OTW 108), to prove to his memory that this really happened. However, as Harry says, 'the point of the story is that in his agitation the American had forgotten to take the lens-cap from his

camera' (OTW 108), therefore bringing into question the authenticity of reality without tangible record of proof. A camera was never present to record the act of bravery which lost Robert Beech his arm and won him the Victoria Cross medal. Robert had just heard of his wife's death, and Harry hints that an act of bravery could easily have been an act of suicide: 'No camera was present to ... show ... how long he held on to the grenade after picking it up' (OTW 197). The camera would never have been able to expose what would happen when Robert 'stepped out of the picture and the picture changed, and with a bang, instead of being scattered into nothingness, the whole pattern of his future life clamped around him' (OTW 197). The juxtaposition between the realities captured and created on film and the authenticity of unrecorded reality is further explored in another of Harry's photo-journalistic anecdotes: 'when the modern photo-explorer sets out to "capture on film" ... the remote tribesman who can still be found living in pre-Bronze Age conditions ... the tribesman says, No thanks: the camera will steal his reality' (OTW 196). Harry even admits that taking photos of war-ravaged countries and their people, maimed, desperate and dying is nothing like 'reality': 'the real, the true - the ultimate - stuff' of his father's bombing. Despite the powers of the camera and the media, and at the same time *through* the media lens, *Out of This World* reveals reality to be an opaque, transient and murky fact of life, offering different perspectives for different people.

Swift soon makes it clear that a picture or recording of reality offers just one representation of what has happened at a given time, and more importantly, a photograph is subject to unlimited interpretation. For Harry there are two major

problems with the media when it claims to depict reality: 'When you put something on record, when you make a simulacrum of it, you have already decided you will lose it' (OTW 55); and, 'The problem is what you don't see' (OTW 117). These arguments refer to the inevitable fact that when a photo is taken, the moment is removed from its greater context: 'The extraction of the world from the world' (OTW 119). For example, Harry takes a picture of an American soldier in Vietnam, in the act of throwing a grenade. The photo is printed on t-shirts, posters and advertising material, evoking the quintessential hero of war: 'It's pure Greek statue, pure Hollywood, pure charisma' (OTW 119). A moment after the photograph, the marine receives 'a round in the chest' and is killed. Harry argues that the hailed picture portrays a man who was killed moments after the photo; a man who had a family and a home, and yet no one considered what came before or after that one photograph. Reality has been extracted from reality to create another form of reality.

Story-telling also possesses this ability to extract the 'world from the world'. As *Out of This World* progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the camera operates in a similar manner to the genre of story telling. A large part of the novel is concerned with war and the portrayal of violence in people's consciousness. World Wars I and II are lodged in our memories, whether we were there or not. Swift suggests that mass killings and mass illustrations reinforce one another. Our inherited photographic images tend to be confirmed by the reporting and representation of each new war. Like the formula for a fairy tale, the same patterns of association remain. However, despite its attempt to capture everything, the camera, like the story, is selective in its material. The

reasons for this remain the same as in story telling: the narrator may choose to omit material, or the material may be too large to represent accurately. Harry, in his lamentations to an absent Sophie, says: 'Someone has to be witness, someone has to see ... Tell me Sophie, can it be a kindness not to tell what you see?' (*OTW* 163). Harry has struggled with the problem of telling and showing what he has seen since his early days as a World War II correspondent. Officials confiscated photos of violent death and suffering, choosing to release pictures reinforcing valour, bravery and courage. But the cameraman, like the story-teller, can choose to shift the camera lens to another frame, and omit disturbing material. The camera may mirror reality, but as Harry comes to realise, that reflection is only a fragment of the wider world: 'The problem is what you don't see. The problem is your field of vision ... The problem is selection ... the frame, the separation of the image from the thing. The extraction of the world from the world.' (*OTW* 119). Harry is the eye behind the camera and the epitome of the modern media man. Through his narration he comes to recognise that his faith in the camera has been misguided and the value of life lies elsewhere: with his daughter Sophie, his fiancé and his unborn child.

Sophie has grown up with her father's obsession with photography and the events he records. Following the bomb explosion which kills her grandfather and provides Harry with another opportunity to record 'reality', Sophie chooses to ban cameras from her life. Living in New York with her husband Joe and two sons, she will not allow cameras in the house. Yet, Sophie is a woman who likes to know how things really are. She tells us that she likes New York because violence is expected, the city does not hide from

what it is, and for Sophie, 'There's a sort of comfort, a sort of security ... in the absence of disguise, in knowing the way things really are' (*OTW* 17). Instead of looking to events outside her own world, Sophie chooses to narrate her story as she sees it, rather than the constructions manipulated by the media. After the bombing, the lives of Robert, Harry and Sophie Beech are the subject of many newspaper and television items, but Sophie indicates that despite the accuracy of facts the reality was somehow different: 'It's all there. It was all news, public knowledge. What more can I say? Except how it really -' (*OTW* 110). Despite her insistence on the 'real' facets of life, Sophie indulges in fairy tales, turning the memories of her childhood with her grandfather into a series of 'Once upon a times'. As in Swift's other novels the use of the fairy tale indicates a desire on behalf of the narrator to escape the present and reconstruct avoided memories of the past. This is also true of Sophie, and further reinforces the creative and manipulative powers shared by the traditional story-teller and the story teller of the modern world, the media. However, in a text so preoccupied with the modes of modern reality, punctures of fantasy serve more to draw the reader's attention to the close, and inter-related worlds of truth and imagination.

According to Harry, 'Picture books aren't real. The fairy tales all got discredited a long time ago' (*OTW* 78). Later in his narration he rethinks this, saying:

I used to think ours' was the age in which we would say farewell to myths and legends, where they would fall off us like useless plumage and we would see ourselves clearly only as what we are. I thought the camera was the key to this

process. But I think the world cannot bear to be only what it is. The world always wants another world, a shadow, an echo, a model of itself. (*OTW* 119)

Therefore, in a world which values only what it can see, people continue to have a desire for the unreal, and so the fairy tale occurs in non-traditional forms. These include the dreams sold by Joe, television and its coverage of the moon landing, the 'unreal' worlds portrayed by the cinema, and even the camera. Sophie's husband Joe describes his holiday business as 'selling dreams': 'I sell dreams ... we show them the pictures. And then we send them through the screen, and who knows if the pictures aren't going to come real?' (*OTW* 153). This is the fairy tale craved by the modern, fantasy-deprived people of America. Joe is unlike Harry and Sophie in that he believes life to be a dream; he has no interest in reality: 'All is only a dream ... I have this formula with dreams ... Never pinch yourself to check. If it's good, why not take the trip? If it's bad, why discover that you can no longer tell yourself: But it's only a dream?' (*OTW* 158). Sophie believes in the contrary. For approximately three-quarters of her narrative she cannot contemplate that life may be part fantasy. As discussed in chapter one, her sessions with Dr K enable Sophie to realise that fairy tales are an acceptable and necessary part of life, and that they may occur in forms she finds abhorrent. Perhaps even the horrific events portrayed through the lens of her father's camera are part fantasy. The Nuremburg war crime trials are one such event tainted with an atmosphere of make-believe. Harry suggests that people produce fairy tale images in association with such horror in order to place the facts in a realm of consciousness which can be accepted or confronted: 'Nothing is more conscious-cleansing than an

exhibition of culprits. Nothing is more cathartic than the conversion of fact into fable' (OTW, 134). The ability and temptation for one to exist in the two worlds of fantasy and fact is at the very core of this novel, but more than Swift's other novels, the characters of *Out of This World* struggle to leave the modernity of the twentieth century and indulge in the 'primitive and mysterious thing called story telling', (Graham Swift with Kim Hill - 22 October 1997) which indeed takes us out of this world.

This argument is suggested by the novel's title: *Out of This World*. As the novel begins the reader identifies Swift's typical juxtaposition of many worlds – the worlds of past and present, reality and fantasy, the personal and the more widely experienced. The narration of the text indicates that the media is also part of these juxtapositions, as it provides an ulterior reality in which faith and trust is placed. Yet this is an argument inherent in the story telling genre. The modern world searches to find new ways in which to tell stories, and in many ways the camera has made this both easier and more difficult. Harry hypothesises that, 'Once, privileged generations were brought up to emulate a world no one could see. Now everyone has a world to emulate, floating before them' (OTW 188). Sophie talks of her sons 'sipping in the pictures. Lapping up the universe' (OTW 27), and yet the camera is a constant mirror of 'reality', so much so that Sophie feels 'There isn't a point in the world where you can get away from the world' (OTW 15). For others, the camera, in particular the film camera and the cinema, are the modern day narrators of fabulous stories and worlds of fantasy and imagination. Like fairy tales, the cinema enables people to step 'out of this world' into another. Harry reminisces about his childhood, saying: 'as for stepping into another world, I found I

could do that more easily stepping into the Rex, the Empire or the Rialto cinemas' (OTW 188). But the world has changed since Harry's youth, and the camera, the story, fantasy and reality have become so entwined that there exists an underlying fear that there is no distinction and no world beyond the moments recorded and displayed by the camera:

the movies you see aspire to the 'actuality' of the newsreel, while TV can never have enough 'real life' footage. So that it's no longer easy to distinguish the real from the fake, or the world on the screen from the world off it. (OTW 188)

This dilemma of inter-changeable worlds exists on the first page of the novel as Robert and Harry sit watching Armstrong's steps on the moon. Harry, the man who makes a living from behind a camera, says that Armstrong's message to mankind 'didn't work, because you knew it was rehearsed and the cameras were on him ... The camera first, then the event' (OTW 13). Through motifs of reality and unreality Swift explores the concept of the disparity between 'news', 'reality' and 'truth'. Ultimately, the camera serves as the story-teller, implying that 'truth' and 'reality' are seen and experienced in diverse ways by different people. Harry knows that the answer to his question 'Do we share the same reality, you and I?' must be a resounding 'no'. However, the blurring of the recorded and unrecorded worlds, and the intangibility of reality as captured by the camera serve to reveal to Harry and Sophie that value and 'reality' may be found *in* this world rather than *out* of it.

Despite such catastrophic and auspicious events as civil and world war, man landing on the moon and an IRA bombing, *Out of This World* is most concerned with the smaller world of personal and family relationships. The first pages of the novel draw attention to this juxtaposition, contrasting Armstrong's landing on the moon with Robert and Harry's conversation on a balcony somewhere in England. Harry is aware of the disparity, saying: 'For some reason we were closer than we'd ever been. It was our closeness that mattered, more than the men on the distant moon' (OTW 14). For many years Harry has ignored the world of family, preoccupied with greater events: war, human suffering, peace rallies. Harry has believed in a reality portrayed by the media. But as his narration progresses, he comes to realise that 'Big' is not always 'Better': 'Small worlds. Big worlds. The one can eclipse the other. When the moon blots out the sun and makes the world go dark, it isn't because the moon is bigger than the sun' (OTW 101). In reference to his own life, Harry discovers that just a few people can constitute a world that has far greater value and meaning than any political or media experience. Jenny, her unborn baby, and Sophie combine with memories of Robert and Anna to constitute a world of great importance, far greater than Harry could ever have imagined. He no longer has an urge to travel to the most dangerous corners of the earth to capture 'reality', trauma and terror on film. Harry has left 'All the faces ... all the shouting, screaming, frightened, weeping, dying, dead faces' (OTW 82) for the world of the personal: 'He sees a face, a sleepy, smiling, brown-haired, blue-eyed face. Framed in the window, it is a living portrait' (OTW 82). For Harry, Jenny is 'Out of this world' (OTW 36). Like her father, Sophie follows a path of self-discovery. For many years she has been preoccupied with her grandfather's violent death and the neglect of her photo-

journalist father. The photos taken by Harry immediately following the bombing of Robert Beech are particularly hurtful, and must be forgotten before the events and relationships of the present can be appreciated. Eventually, Sophie is able to forget the camera and value her own perceptions of the present: 'A perfect snapshot. Framed by the kitchen window. The laughing father, the laughing sons' (*OTW* 76). Sophie comes to realise that the smaller world of her own consciousness and personal well-being is more important than the wider world of the traumatic past, and like Harry, she discovers that the wider world must be left behind and the small, but infinitely more valuable world of her family embraced.

The idea of smaller and larger worlds is closely related to the novel's epigraph: 'What the eye sees not, the heart rues not'(*OTW*). Sophie puts this slightly differently when she says: 'What you never know will never hurt you' (*OTW* 26). Ironically, Harry claims to be one who has the power of sight, who uses the camera as eyes for the world: 'Seeing is believing and certain things must be seen to have been done. Without the camera the world might start to disbelieve' (*OTW* 38). In many respects Sophie is correct in suggesting that what Harry cannot see through the lens of his camera, he does not care about. He is under the impression that what cannot be seen through the lens cannot harm him: 'All you are is your eyes, all there is your eyes, your vision is you ... If you exist in your vision, then nothing can hurt you, you will never be frightened of anything' (*OTW* 121). Here he is wrong. Harry has not seen Sophie for many years, and yet his neglect of her continues to hurt him. Despite what Harry has in his vision, he is frightened of what cannot be seen by the naked eye: the loneliness of his youth;

the betrayal and tragic death of his wife, Anna; and the struggle of his relationship with his father and his daughter.

The epigraph can also be inverted to read: what the eye cannot see, the heart may still care about. Both Harry and Sophie discover that the world is more than a series of pictures projected by the media and by unforgiving memories. For example, Harry shares an unseen love with Jenny and an unseen future together; the unborn child and the absent Sophie are not in the eye's immediate vision either. Once again this is a juxtaposition of 'small' worlds and 'big' worlds. Harry asks: 'A photo a piece of reality? A fragment of truth?' (OTW 120), and at the conclusion of the novel it is clear that what the eye sees is not necessarily what is valuable in life, for value is found in the heart. As Harry comes to realise: 'If you have reality, who needs the picture?' (OTW 56). The seen and recorded impressions of *Out of This World* exclude the not seen; that which is either suppressed or cannot be visualised in a tangible manner. Although every picture tells a story, the heart of the story may well consist in something that can not be photographed, or if photographed, may not appear in the representation.

According to Swift's novels, in particular *Waterland*, *Ever After* and *Out of This World*, reality consists of perceptions formed by stories: fairy tales, family yarns, personal narratives and representations conveyed through the lens of a camera and the screens of television and the cinema. The epigraph to this chapter states that all in this world is

a tale: 'Of the telling there is no end'. McCarthy's hypothesis is foreshadowed by Carlyle:

Actual events are nowise simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new: it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable elements (Tennyson 60).

Primarily, this is what makes and shapes history, and in McCarthy's words, 'this world ... all in it is a tale and each tale the sum of all lesser tales and yet these also are the selfsame tale and contain as well all else within them' (McCarthy 143). Walter Benjamin believed that history and the 'epic form' share a relationship similar to 'white light and the colours of the spectrum': 'In the broad spectrum of the chronicle the ways in which a story can be told are graduated like shadings of one and the same colour. The chronicler is the historyteller' (95). Swift proposes a blend of these arguments in *Waterland*. For Crick, history is a culmination of story-telling facets and paradoxically is a story. As discussed in chapter two, history provides Crick with an 'explanation' for the world. However, like the traditional bedtime story, history quiets fears, provides ulterior reasoning, and most significantly, offers an alternative and varied reality. The question of how we know history, and therefore reality, is the primary theme of *Waterland*, and

indeed all Swift's novels. As *Waterland* progresses, it becomes clear that history is *his* story, Crick's story, told to a classroom of students as part fact, part fiction. *Waterland's* first epigraph gives the definition of 'Historia'. These meanings ('1. Inquiry, investigation, learning. 2. a) a narrative of past events, history. b) any kind of narrative: account, tale, story.') suggest that stories and narrative are an integral part of history, and that history can be as varied and transient as Crick's musings. It is also of interest to note that these dictionary definitions also confirm that language is indefinite, that meaning is a construction as indeed is language. For Tom Crick, Bill Unwin and Harry and Sophie Beech, narrating history makes life 'real'. Yet there is also a realisation, if not on behalf of the narrator, then certainly the reader, that it is impossible to know 'facts' outside the telling or writing of them.

Historiographic metafiction inherently supports this argument. As discussed in chapter one, the reader of historiographic metafiction is forced to acknowledge the artifice of the text, and yet demands are made on the reader to 'co-create' the scenarios and relationships described, and therefore react as he or she would in life. The historiographic metafiction text invariably asserts that its world is both fictive and yet undeniably historical. The fictive and the factual co-habit the realm of the discourse. Above all, Swift's novels recognise that story telling may be fiction, but the products of the imagination are integral and necessary facets of reality. Furthermore, Swift hypothesises that 'reality' is nothing more than a series of tales and memories, connected to the perpetual mystery of experience.

History and storytelling are discourses, and therefore constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past. For Swift, reality is found, not in the experience of the original event, but in the re-construction of that experience. Swift acknowledges the meaning-making function of these constructs in *Waterland*: 'Man ... is the story-telling animal. Wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting markers buoys and trail-signs of stories' (W 47). History is both a story and a trail-sign. We have to tell histories in order to explain ourselves, although we can never, in however many tellings, get it right. History, like the fairy tale, is largely the construct of imagination; a series of stories re-arranged, re-interpreted and re-told through the eyes of an individual. Throughout *Waterland* Tom Crick is preoccupied with the fusion of fairy-tale and history, eloquently stating: 'There are times when we have to disentangle history from fairy tale. There are times ... when good, dry textbook takes a plunge into the swamps of myth and has to be retrieved with empirical fishing lines' (W 64). For Crick, history is a 'fairy tale search after the timeless unknown' (W 150), thus indicating that history is merely another story told from a different perspective. After all, as the narrator notes, history is 'his story'. As an assembled phenomenon, history can never truly reflect a past reality 'as it was'. Rather, 'truth' and 'reality' amount to a fusion of horizons - those of history and fiction. In Swift's novels these realms collude in the author's use of the autobiographical form and the faculty of memory. Through first-person narration, and most importantly, the narrator's use of story-telling, fairy-tales, family history, geographic history and accounts of experience, events of the past are revisited. Primarily, these are reconstructions, fished from the depths of memory and presented as personal view. Swift strongly refutes the idea that

the past exists in a pre-established form, simply waiting to be discovered and presented from a universal perspective. Rather, he believes that the remembered experience is viewed from the 'Here and Now' of the present, and can therefore never exist in its original form. This is evident in Swift's use of disruptive chronology in his novels. For example, *Waterland* juxtaposes four different time periods: the 1970s, the nineteenth century, the 1940s and the present day. Post-modern metafictional writer Julian Barnes severely questions these issues in his novel *Flaubert's Parrot*, asking:

How do we seize the past? We read, we learn, we ask, we remember, we are humble; and then a casual detail shifts everything ... We can study files for decades, but every so often we are tempted to throw up our hands and declare that history is merely another literary genre: the past is autobiographical fiction pretending to be a parliamentary report. (Barnes 90)

History can never be fully re-captured, and paradoxically it can never be destroyed. Umberto Eco writes: 'The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognising that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently' (Hutcheon *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 90). Swift also recognises that history is an ever present part of our reality, and to ignore it, or destroy it leads to dire consequences. Like Carlyle, Swift presents reality as a place where 'History comes together not as it should, but as it can and will' (Tennyson 110).

For many post-modern writers, reality is merely a series of disconnected events, further alienated by the discourse of the written text. Roland Barthes, in his famous paper 'The Death of the Author' writes:

As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively ... the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins ... It is language which speaks, not the author; to write is ... to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'. (142)

Similarly, 'life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred' (Barthes, 147). Swift's view transgresses slightly from Barthes in that he believes the individual to form his or her own reality from personal narration. However, he does support Barthes in believing that 'the birth of the Reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' (Barthes 147). *Out of This World's* Harry states: 'When you put something on record, when you make a simulacrum of it, you have already decided you will lose it' (*OTW*). At some level Swift's novels all adhere to this hypothesis. Swift's novels propose that once an experience is narrated it is free to be interpreted. Thus, the narrator no longer has possession of the story, idea or experience, and the listener or reader is free to interpret at will. By revealing that reality is at the discretion of the individual, who has the power to alter and manipulate historical 'truth', Swift intimates that nothing is true, and nothing can be known.

This chapter's epigraph states: 'Of the telling there is no end'. All Swift's novels, particularly *Ever After*, *Waterland* and *Out of This World*, utilise elements of the traditional fairy tale in order to reveal life as a series of stories to be told and re-told as the moment takes us. These are stories of our reality, which is transient and ever changing according to our present. Just as each reader takes different values and messages from Swift's novels, we interpret and adopt varying meanings from the tales of everyday life. Accordingly, we discover the impossibility of ever knowing reality or achieving self-knowledge. Our journey to comprehend what is 'true' and 'real' in life can never end as there is always another experience to alter our comprehension of the past, and another story to explain that experience. These stories do not capture what is 'real', but serve to reveal the many possibilities of truth. Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen* begins: 'Now we are about to begin, and you must attend; and when we get to the end of the story, you will know more than you do now' (Anderson 209). The narratives enmeshed in the pages of *Shuttlecock*, *Ever After*, *Waterland*, *Out of This World* and *Last Orders* may serve nothing more than to reveal the transient nature of knowledge to both the narrator and the reader. When the story is told, we will know more, but never all, for 'by attempting to explain we may come, not to an Explanation, but to a knowledge of the limits of our power to explain' (W 81).

Works Cited

Andersen, Hans Christian. *Fairy Tales*. London: Ward, Lock and Co, 1964.

Banfield, Ann. *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language Of Fiction*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.

Barnes, Julian. *Flaubert's Parrot*. London: Picador, 1984.

Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1968.

Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.

Bloom, H. *T.S Eliot's The Wasteland*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986.

Bloomfield, Morton W, ed. *The Interpretation of Narrative Theory and Practice*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970.

- Brady, Leo. *Narrative Form in History and Fiction: Hume, Fielding and Gibbon*.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Brewer, John, and Stella Tillyard. 'History and Telling Stories: Graham Swift's
Waterland'. *History Today*. Vol. 35. 1985. 49-51.
- Canary, Robert H, and Henry Kozicki, eds. *The Writing of History: Literary Form and
Historical Understanding*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.
- Carr, J.L. 'The Complaints of a Violent Family'. *Contemporary Literary Fiction*. Vol.
88. (1995). 286-287.
- Carroll, David. 'History as Writing'. *Clio*. Vol. 7:3. 1978. 443-461.
- Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949.
- Cockshut, A.O.J. *The Art of Autobiography in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century
England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Cookson, L, and B. Coughney, eds. *Critical Essays on The Wasteland*. Harlow:
Longman Group U.K Limited, 1988.

Cooper, Pamela. 'Imperial Topographies: The Space of History in *Waterland*'. *Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. 42:2. Summer 1996. 371-396.

Cuddy, L.A, and D.H Hirsh, eds. *Critical Essays on T.S Eliot's The Wasteland*. Boston: G.K Hall, 1991.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. London: Wordsworth Editions, 1992.

Duchene, Anne. 'By the Grace of the Teller'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88. 1995. 285-286.

Federman, Raymond, ed. *Surfiction: Fiction Now ...and Tomorrow*. Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1975.

Finney, Brian. *The Inner I : British Literary Autobiography in the Twentieth Century*. London: Faber and Faber, 1985.

Foley, Barbara. *Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction*. London: Cornell University, 1986.

Fowles, John. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1987.

_____. 'Notes on an Unfinished Novel'. *Afterwards*. Ed. Thomas McCormack.
London: Harper and Row, 1969. 136-150.

Gasiorek, Andrzej. *Post-War British Fiction: Realism and After*. Auckland: Edward
Arnold, 1995.

Ghose, Zulfikar. *The Fiction of Reality*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1983.

Gibley, Ryan. 'Time Out'. *Premiere*. May, 1996. 59-61.

Gilbert, Harriet. 'The Lost Boys'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88. 1995.
284-285.

Gish, Nancy, K. *The Wasteland: A Poem of Memory and Desire*. Boston: Twayne
Publishers, 1988.

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London: The Penguin
Press, 1969.

Hara, Earchi. 'Stories Present and Absent in *Great Expectations*'. *English Literary
History*. Vol. 56. 1986. 593-613.

Harris, MacDonald. 'Love Among the Ichthyosaurs'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol.88. 1995. 316 –318.

Higdon, David Leon. 'Double Closures in Postmodern British Fiction: The Example of Graham Swift'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88. 1995. 305-310.

_____. ' "Unconfessed Confessions": The Narrators of Graham Swift and Julian Barnes.' *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88. 1995. 310-313.

Holmes, Frederick M. 'The Novel, Illusion and Reality: The Paradox of Omniscience in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*'. *Journal of Narrative Technique*. Vol. 11. 1981. 184-197.

Hutcheon, Linda. *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1980.

_____. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

Janik, Del Ivan. 'History and the "Here and Now": The Novels of Graham Swift'. *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol. 35, (1989), 74-88.

Jones, Steven Swann. *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of Imagination*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.

Kermode, Frank. 'Novel, History and Type'. *Novel*. Vol. 1:3, (1968), 231-238.

Keynes, G, ed. *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1964.

La Capra, Dominick. *History and Criticism*. London: Cornell University Press, 1985.

La Capra, Dominick, and Steven L. Kaplan, eds. *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisal and New Perspectives*. London: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Landow, G.P. 'Introduction'. Ed G.P Landow. *Approaches to Victorian Autobiography*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979.

Lange, Victor. 'Fact in Fiction'. *Comparative Literature Studies*. Vol. 6:3. 1969. 253-261.

Lee, Alison. *Realism and Power: Postmodern British Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Lee, Hermoine. 'Shutter and Lens'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 287.

Lee, A. Robert. *First Person Singular: Studies in American Autobiography*. London: Vision Press, 1988.

Levenson, Michael. 'Sons and Fathers'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 321-324.

Levine, Paul. 'Reality and Fiction'. *Hudson Review*. Vol. 19:1, (1966-1967), 135-138.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962.

Loe, Thomas. 'Gothic Plot in *Great Expectations*'. *Dickens Quarterly*. Vol. 6. 1989. 102-110.

Luthi, Max. *The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

_____. *Once Upon a Time on the Nature of Fairy Tales*. London: Indiana University Press, 1976.

McCarthy, Cormac. *The Crossing*. London: Picador, 1995.

McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*. New York: Methuen, 1987.

Mantel, Hilary. 'Blood Ties'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 318-321.

Marker, Chris (director). *La Jetée*, 1963.

Milne, Kirsty. 'Static Pools'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 313.

Myer, Rudolf. *The Wisdom Of Fairy Tales*. New York: Floris Books, 1981.

Nalbantian, S. *Aesthetic Autobiography: From Life to Art in Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Anais Nin*. New York: St Martins Press, 1994.

Newcomb, Mildred. *The Imagined World of Charles Dickens*. London: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Niethammer, Lutz. *Posthistoric: Has History Come to an End?* London: Verso, 1993.

Noyes, Russell. *English Romantic Poetry and Prose*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1956.

Opie, Iona, and Peter Opie. *The Classic Fairy Tales*. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Orr, Linda. 'The Revenge of Literature: A History of History'. *New Literary History*. Vol. 18:1, (1986), 1-22.

Parrinder, Patrick. 'Verbing a Noun'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88. 1995. 288-289.

Peterson, Linda H. *Victorian Autobiography: The Tradition of Self-Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Poole, Adrian. 'Hurry Up Please, It's Time'. *Guardian Weekly*. January 28 1996. 29.

Reed, J.R. *Victorian Conventions*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975.

Roth, Michael S. 'Introduction'. *New Literary History*. Vol. 21, (1989-90), 2-9.

Rudman, Frank. 'Graham Swift'. *Contemporary Authors*. Vol. 117, (1990), 442.

Sage, Lorna. 'Unwin Situation'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88. 1995. 313-315.

Schad, John. 'The End of the End of History: Graham Swift's *Waterland*'. *Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. 38. 1992. 911-921.

Schafer, Roy. 'Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue'. *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 7, (1980-81), 30-53.

Scholes, R, and R. Kellogg, eds. *The Nature of Narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Sexton, Linda Gray. 'The White Silence of Their Lives'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 289-290.

Southam, B.C. *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S Eliot*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1968.

Smith, Barbara Herrnstein. *On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature to Language*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Stone, Harry. *Dickens and the Invisible World: Fairy Tales, Fantasy and Novel-Making*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1979.

Swann-Jones, Steven. *The Fairy Tale: The Magic Mirror of Imagination*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.

Swift, Graham. *Ever After*. London: Picador, 1992.

_____. *Last Orders*. London: Picador, 1996.

_____. *Learning to Swim and Other Stories*. London: Picador, 1982.

_____. *Out of This World*. London: Penguin Books, 1988.

_____. *Shuttlecock*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1981.

_____. *The Sweet Shop Owner*. London: Penguin Books, 1983.

_____. *Waterland*. New York: Washington Square Press, 1985.

_____. '1974'. In *21 Picador Authors Celebrate 21 Years of Outstanding International Writing*. London: Picador, 1993.

_____. *Last Orders*, Graham Swift with Kim Hill. NTN, 22 October 1996.

- Tartar, Maria. *The Hard Facts of the Grimm Fairy Tales*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Tennyson, G.B, ed. *A Carlyle Reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Thiher, Allen. *Words in Reflection: Modern Language Theory and Postmodern Fiction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Wall, Stephen. 'Self-Slaughters'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 315-316.
- Walpole, Horace. *The Castle of Otranto*. London: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Warner, Marina. *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1987.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. Methuen & Co, 1984.
- White, Hayden. 'The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory'. *History and Theory*. Vol. 23, (1984), 3-33.

_____. 'Narrativization of Real Events'. *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 7. 1980-81. 793-798.

Wilt, Judith. 'Abortion and the Fears of the Fathers: Five Male Writers'. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 88, (1995), 302-305.

Wolff, Melora. 'History, His Story, and Stories in Graham Swift's *Waterland*'. *Studies in the Literary Imagination*. Vol. 23-24, (1990-1991), 197-211.

Von Franz, Marie-Louise. *The Psychological Meaning of Redemption Motifs in Fairytales*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980.

Zinsser, William. *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.

Zipes, Jack. *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*. New York: Methuen, 1979.

_____. *Fairy Tale as Myth: Myth as Fairy Tale*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994.